

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 May 2007

Providing • education • highways • trading standards • social services

TEXTILES

You can help to pick up
the thread

Page 9

£250m FUTURE

Sneak a look at
regeneration plans

Page 5

SAVE A STAMP

Vision comps, letters
and picture – all online

See page 3

FACT: Children thrive best in a loving family

WE NEED

50

more foster parents
now

THE SEARCH is on for people with hearts of gold to dramati- cally change the lives of children in Lancashire.

At least 50 more foster carers across the county are urgently needed to provide our vulnerable children with safe and caring homes.

Of the 1,250 children looked after by Lancashire County Council, more than 750 are placed in foster care – with the numbers being fostered falling.

"A wider pool of foster carers would drastically increase the chance of finding the right foster family for the right child", says service manager Paul Hegarty.

This month, the county council is launching a new recruitment campaign to appeal for more foster carers.

This coincides with a national awareness campaign, Care Fortnight, from 14 to 27 May.

The county council's initiative will involve a two-week advertising campaign and a series of local information events where people considering fostering can speak to current foster carers and find out more about full-time, part-time and respite fostering.

More foster carers are desperately needed, particularly those looking after sibling groups and older children that can not be easily adopted and need a permanent foster home.

The county council currently enlists the support of over 650 approved foster carers across the county, as the single largest agency in the North West.

Paul said: "Fostering helps prevent children being moved from home to home, having to live a long way from their friends and family, and ensuring brothers and sisters remain together.

"Foster care is overwhelmingly

the best place for children who cannot live at home or with other family members."

He added: "Fostering still remains a major part of our children's social care policy for looked-after children.

"We are seeking to recruit around 50 more foster carers across the county to provide vulnerable children with safe and caring homes on a temporary or permanent basis while they are unable to live with their own families."

"If you have the commitment and a desire to support children in care, then fostering could be for you. We would love to hear from you."

For more information
about fostering in
Lancashire contact
freephone 0800 195 1183 or
visit www.fosteringinlancashire.co.uk

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.

Blue badges in the pink

Mr B from Preston writes:

I am in the process of filling in an application form for a Blue Badge. I need a bit of help filling it in as I don't understand one of the questions.

As I understand it, all Blue Badge applications and renewals are being dealt with at the Red Rose Hub, so could I arrange to come in to discuss this with someone?

Currently there is no front-facing service at the Red Rose Hub so you will not be able to go in for advice. However, they have an excellent telephone helpline for Blue Badge queries. The contact number is: **0845 0530049**.

A customer service officer will answer any questions regarding your application.

When completed you should return the form to Blue Badge Scheme, Red Rose Hub, Bluebell Way, Preston, Lancashire PR2 5PZ.

Ask Amey

Mr J from Lancaster writes:

Can anything be done to clean up the M6 verges, particularly the slip roads around Lancaster and Carnforth?

It looks as if one authority cleans the motorway verges and another the main roads but no-one ever does the slip roads. The only word for them is disgraceful.

For queries regarding maintenance of adopted roads within Lancashire you should contact Lancashire Highways on **0845 053001**.

Depending on the nature and location of the query they will establish who is responsible.

Motorways and slip roads are usually the responsibility of the relevant Highways Agency.

For this particular area you should contact Amey Mouchell Area 13 on: **0845 600 1628** or by email at: **mac13.ncc@amey-mouchell.com**

Highways obstruction

Mr C from Lancaster writes:

There is a neglected footpath close to where I live that has been an eyesore for about 10 years now. Trees are overgrown and street lights unlit.



●SCHOOL dinners are getting tastier all the time - and cash help may be available (see Help with meals).

All that is done is a street sweeper brushes the dirt off the concrete. Help!

Any problems relating to street lights or overgrown trees positioned on the adopted highway should be reported to Lancashire Highways on **0845 053 0011** or by email at: **highways@lancashire.gov.uk** and a customer service officer will arrange for the problem to be investigated.

I have contacted Lancashire Highways and informed them of the footpath concerned and they are looking into your enquiry.

Help with meals

Miss T from Chorley writes:

My daughter is about to start at our local primary school this September. I am a single parent and was just wondering if my child may be eligible for free school meals.

If so, how do I apply?

You would be entitled to free school meals if you get Income Support; income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; guarantee element of State Pension Credit or if you get Child Tax Credits (but without any Working Tax Credit and have an income of less than £14,495).

This is a national policy therefore free school meals cannot be granted on a discretionary basis.

To apply, you need to complete an application form available from your child's school or your local Area Education Office.

Shopkeepers' duties

Mr B from Fulwood writes:

Just down the road from where I live is a small grocery shop that I have problems getting into.

I am disabled and in a wheelchair but most shops do provide ramps to improve access.

Is the shopkeeper obliged to provide disabled access?

Main entrances should be accessible for both able and disabled users alike, although there are some small shops or businesses that do not comply.

You need to contact Lancashire Highways on the number below and they will arrange for a highways inspector to visit the shop and discuss access requirements with the owner.

Lancashire Highways, telephone: **0845 053 0011**; email: **highways@lancashire.gov.uk**

Online vacancies

Mrs S from Preston writes:

My husband has recently been relocated to the Preston area by his employers.

Until we moved house I worked as a clerical assistant for the local council so I would be extremely interested in working for Lancashire County Council.

Where should I send my CV to?

Lancashire County Council only accepts applications that are submitted using one of our standard application forms.

All our job vacancies are advertised on our website at: **www.lancashire.gov.uk/vacancies**

Each vacancy will include information on how to apply and many have an online application form.

Vacancies are also advertised in local papers throughout Lancashire.

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**.

New look for outdoor play at nursery

BIG changes are planned for a small piece of land at Little Fishes Nursery in Langho which will make a major difference to outdoor play activities for youngsters.

Lancashire County Council's Community Design programme has produced plans which will see a small lawned area turned in to a vibrant outdoor planting and play facility.

Caroline Pope, who is co-ordinating the improvement works, said: "Thanks to the county council's investment we are now able to begin raising money for the project. The initial £500 the council has spent designing the scheme will get the ball rolling and attract the funding we need to get the work done."



●TIM Blythe is seen here handing over plans to Caroline Pope, from Little Fishes nursery in Langho, Jenny Pelech of the parent and toddler group with Harry Pope (2), and Thomas Woodward (3).

Tim Blythe, from the Environmental Projects Team, explained: "It is far easier for active community organisations to see their local project ideas realised if they have a decent set of professionally produced plans to work with and help them along the way."

£12,800 path plan

AN area of Preston has benefited from £12,800 of improvements thanks to a major partnership project.

Lancashire County Council environmental project officers have been working with Holme Slack Community Primary School, Preston Council's park section, and the Environment Agency to restore part of a footpath, which has been eroded by a brook.

The county council's Environmental Projects Team and the school have developed an agreement where the school donates part of its playing field so the footpath can be moved from the brook. The playing field will be drained and levelled.



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

www.lancashire.gov.uk/vacancies

Lancashire
County Council

Open wide and say 'aah'

County 'watchdog' seeking your views on the current state of NHS dentistry across Lancashire

CAN you find an NHS dentist?

Being able to find an NHS dentist is a topic of interest to health scrutiny members of Lancashire County Council.

Since the introduction of the new NHS dentist contract in April 2006, how has accessibility to an NHS dentist changed?

Members of the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee want to find out your views.

County Councillor Tim Ormrod, chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee, said: "In June last year the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee looked at how

the contract would be implemented in Lancashire.

"The NHS told the committee that almost all the dentists would be signing up to the new contract."

Extra funding, together with the funding from those unsigned contracts, would be reinvested by Primary Care Trusts to provide more NHS dental places.

In addition, a new Dental School in Preston will encourage dentists to stay in the county once qualified.

The scrutiny committee decided to review the effect of the introduction of the new contract and as part of that process they are keen to find out

your views.

Engaging with the public is something overview and scrutiny in local government sees as a priority.

Councillor Ormrod added: "Finding out the views of Lancashire people on an important public health issue such as this is crucial to our role."

"We must examine how the NHS and other agencies are providing services which contribute to improving peoples health and well being and reduces inequality."

You can submit your views by writing to scrutiny@css.lancscc.gov.uk or Overview and Scrutiny, County Secretary and Solicitors Group, Lancashire



● **SCRUTINY:** County Councillor Tim Ormrod

County Council, PO Box 78, County Hall, Preston. Alternatively you can complete an online questionnaire at www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/overview_scrutiny/

What do you think?

Your view can make a difference by helping the county council in making recommendations to the NHS.

Do you consider it easy or difficult to access an NHS dentist?

EASY: Text 81800 LancsA then the first half of your postcode

DIFFICULT: Text 81800 LancsB then the first half of your postcode

For example, to vote EASY text 81800 LancsA BB4

Standard network rates apply.

Please obtain permission from the bill payer before texting. Details will not be passed to a third party and will be used only for the purposes stated above. SMS services are provided by g8wave London, N7 9AH.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Forward for the over 50s

A NEW scheme to support the over 50s across Lancashire and Morecambe has been launched.

The 50 Forward scheme aims to help people live active and independent lives by offering easy access to information and the creation of a new employment agency and volunteering bureau.

Known nationally as Linkage Plus, the scheme is run by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and is one of only eight projects around the country.

Locally, 50 Forward is co-ordinated by Lancaster City Council, with support from Lancashire County Council, Age Concern, DWP and the Lancaster District Older People's Partnership Board.

Older people are involved to make sure it meets the needs of local communities.

The scheme plans to provide a service which meets older people's needs and encourages them to take an active role in determining their future.

Cream of the county

SCHOOL dinner staff in Lancashire are officially way ahead of caterers nationwide.

Hundreds have now attended training sessions - classes that are so thorough that trainers have won the right to teach catering teams from other councils. Staff also learn how to produce balanced meals and how to market them to pupils.

It means that the county's children are eating better than many other children nationwide.

"We are the first school meal service in the country to become a licensed centre for the Assessment Syndicate for Education and Training", said training manager Janette Mason.

"Everyone who saw the Jamie Oliver programmes 18 months ago will know how important it is to provide good food - and provide it in a way that children will like."

"The accreditation means we can show the way ahead to school dinner staff from other parts of the country."

Right Start for pupils' road safety help

LANCASHIRE'S successful child pedestrian safety training course is to go one step further with thousands more youngsters set to join. The county council's Right Start child pedestrian training programme has trained 45,000 children since its launch in 1999.

With the backing of a report from Edge Hill University, more funding is to go into the casualty reduction scheme.

Roadside testing, focus groups and interviews with staff and parents revealed that the Road Safety Group's hard work was paying off.

Clare Farrer, Deputy Group Manager for the Road Safety Group and Dr Karen Leeming from Edge Hill University presented the findings at the national ROSPA congress.

Clare said: "Right Start was set up to bring about positive changes in the behaviour of children towards road safety, and the research shows that it is succeeding."

"Our planned growth up to 2010 will see 350 schools delivering the programme."

Children are taught in three stages through theory and practical training. So far 186 schools have taken part in the scheme.

By 2009/2010 this will result in 37,000 children receiving training.

For more information on Right Start call 01772 534514 or visit www.lancashire.gov.uk/roadsafety

Science goes Mad



● **REACTION:** Chelsea Smith, 10, from Brabins Endowed School in Chipping and Henry Smith, 11, from St Wilfrid's RC School in Longridge cook up a potion with Crazy Caroline, Mad Scientist.

SIXTY children from Preston primary schools gathered at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) recently to find out at how to make slime slimy, electricity static and create optical illusions.

The event was organised by the Preston Partnership Project to mark the culmination of a series

of entertaining Mad Science workshops.

Sue Bramwell, manager of the Partnership Project, said: "Science is such an exciting subject area and children need to find this out at an early age for them to engage with the topic."

"Our team has used the Mad Science project to hold sessions that are educational and fun."

The Preston Partnership Project has been holding a series of Mad Science workshops in Preston as part of its aim to help children and young people engage with school and learning.

Although this year's programme has now ended the team hope to continue its success in the next academic year.

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.

All at the click of a button



New life for the waste in your bin



●LANCASHIRE'S waste now provides work for many, including Javid Pillar (pictured).

Prosperity Recycling offers work opportunities for people with learning difficulties.

Tel 01254 230123 for details.

PEOPLE in Lancashire will soon be sitting on their own rubbish – literally.

A new recycling deal means the plastic that people send for recycling will be made into maintenance-free and vandal-resistant seats, picnic tables, garden decking and litter bins.

Even better, the deal to recycle an annual 3,000 tonnes of plastic waste will provide accredited employment and training for 30 people with learning difficulties.

"We're using the stuff that people used to throw away like bottles and food containers to get people into work", said Graham Chadwick, director of Accrington's Prosperity Recycling.

"The plastic will be ground up into granules and then reformed into everyday objects such as garden equipment and play equipment.

"It's an environmentally friendly substitute for wood that also lets Lancashire County Council reduce its Landfill Tax bills."

The annual 3,000 tonnes will be a large proportion of the plastic waste that Lancashire people save for recycling.

A number of schools and parks have already bought equipment from

Prosperity, a registered charity. Until now, however, the plastic used by Prosperity has been bought already extruded into planks.

The heavy-duty products look similar to wood but, unlike wood, they never rot and never need painting.

The Fairfield Street factory already recycles waste wood from local businesses into a variety of products. The factory itself is heated by old wood!

Cardboard is also collected from Hyndburn firms and made into new packaging and animal bedding.

The firm's play equipment is used in a number of school playgrounds – and staff go to schools to give recycling lessons.

"Most of the workers here are on work opportunity – people who would once have gone to day care centres.

"This is a new approach to helping them lead a full life. Working here gives them confidence, new friendships



●PLASTIC from Lancashire bins is finding a new home in playgrounds, gardens and public spaces everywhere.

and qualifications so they can lead the life the rest of us take for granted.

"It is also Lancashire waste material so it saves on carting it around the country as happens in some areas.

"Even better, if you get fed up of your picnic table or chair you can just send it back for recycling. Everyone wins with this scheme."

More details on 01254 230123 or visit www.prosperityrecycling.org

WIN garden furniture

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.

Your waste can feature in your garden!

The company also makes garden seats, playground equipment, benches, planters, raised flower beds 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 the simple question below. 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.

Entries must be received by Monday 21 May at: Picnic competition, Vision, Corporate Communications, County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ. Don't forget - you can now enter Vision competitions online 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

Climate change is global

M R TURNER says we need a cool debate on climate change (Vision, April).

That happened at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, composed of 300 delegates from 113 countries, plus 600 scientists. A report summary is available at www.ipcc.ch

The climate has changed faster in the last 100 years than in the previous 10,000 years. Milankovitch's theorem can't explain such rapid change.

Secondly, the climate is changing on a global, not merely local, scale.

The north European freezing event 15,000 years ago was balanced by above average temperatures in the southern hemisphere, so there is no global change there then.

Thirdly, the sea-level rise is measured across the world, not just in Britain, and is caused by thermal expansion of water, not isotopic changes of landmasses.

You can visualise this by thinking about mercury rising in a thermometer – the principle is the same.

It is, however, correct to write of water vapour having the greater effect on the greenhouse effect.

Even so without the natural greenhouse effect we would all be living at minus-15C.

Plenty of people know

where climate change is going, we just don't know how far.

AAUSTIN
Great Harwood

Young recyclers make me smile

WONDER how many elderly people had a grin on their faces while they read Sarah Lawrenson's letter (Vision, April) in which she wrote that something needed to be done to get the "older generation" to buy in.

She said that some older people "feel they may not be around, so it is not important for them". I am 78 – and expect to be around for some time yet! Recycling started for us while we were children.

Now about recycling. Having lived in this house for 35 years, it means I was recycling here five years before Sarah was born. In the Second World War we recycled everything out of necessity.

Clothes, bedding, brown paper, string and hundreds of other things were used and reused over and over again. Nothing, repeat nothing, was ever wasted by us then or now...

I recycle all paper items, wash out tins and remove their labels to put them in the bins provided.

All teabags, eggshells and plant cuttings go in my compost bin along with vegetable scraps.

Milk and fruit juice cartons are also taken away by local



●TRAVEL NoWCards are great - but the plastic cover could be better (see NoWCard saver).

council workmen after I have flattened them and placed them in a bag.

MRS B E SMITH
Skelmersdale

Let's beat this bag menace

RECENTLY returned from South Africa where plastic bags used to litter the barb wire fences in cities, towns and countryside.

The local joke was that

they were called the "national flower".

The countryside is now beautiful once again because about two years ago the government introduced a law that plastic bags in stores had to be purchased and people were encouraged to use green holdalls when shopping!

In a country where people can generally afford to buy bags and much more of the refuse is recycled, surely people in Lancashire should be encouraged to keep our beautiful countryside and natural

areas free of plastic bags.

My husband and I frequently use the cyclepath and were shocked at the amount of litter around. We regularly tell people how good it is and how people are trying hard to make it better for everyone. How long will we be able to say this and will people believe us when they first see the area?

SANDY and RAY
Morecambe

NoWCard saver

MY NoWCard plastic wallet fell into two halves due to constant use. Replacing it involved some cost.

It meant the cardholder paying for a phone call and then Lancashire County Council paying for a stamp to post one out (it was a great service, by the way).

However, if a small stock was held at the county council's information centres and also town hall information centres then the cost of replacement would be cut for the holder and also for the county council.

D PRATT
Accrington

■A good idea – and one we will look at more closely – editor.

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

Garden waste adds up to 475 jumbos

SPRING has already sprung and Vision readers are being urged to get into the composting habit.

Compost Awareness Week takes place in May – a time when many householders will be out with their mowers.

There are many ways to be green in Lancashire.

More than 350,000 households receive a separate garden waste collection in addition to the services offered at Household Waste Recycling Centres.

From April 2005 to March 2006 these two schemes saw more than 78,000 tonnes of rubbish composted – the same weight as 475 jumbo jets.

On top of this, more than 160,000 homes have received free home compost bins.

Clare Atkinson, from the Waste Minimisation Team, said: "It's never been easier to do your bit for the environment.

"You would be amazed at what can be used. Teabags, paper and hair can all go into compost along with other green waste."

For more information, visit www.lancswaste-info.com or call 0845 0500 110.

First for fairness in world of work

BEING flexible has landed Lancashire County Council a top award in the business world.

A flexible working policy has notched a major award with the North West Employers' Organisation praising Lancashire County Council's far-reaching attempts recruiting and retaining a more diverse work force.

As a major employer, the county council now operates more flexible working options and business opening times.

It not only meets legal requirements but leads to efficiency savings to cut down on space used as offices. This also reduces running costs – and ultimately costs to the taxpayer.

County Councillor Vali Patel said: "Flexible working attracts people from all different backgrounds bringing experience and diverse skills."

"We aim to retain skilled, motivated staff who in turn provide improved services for Lancashire people."

"Being more flexible in work patterns – such as home-working – is also expected to provide financial savings, reduce sickness absence and create a workforce of secure and productive employees."

Shortlisted for lottery support

THE proposed linear park on the old Padiham – Rose Grove linear park has been included in a shortlist of projects for a £50m bid to the Living Landmark Lottery.

The bid outcome will be determined by a TV vote in the autumn.

The Sustrans bid – Sustrans is a sustainable transport organisation – is the only project to benefit Lancashire.

The national list of bids has to be reduced in number – and you can help the Padiham bid by registering your support at: www.sustransconnect2.org

People can also show support by writing to: National Cycle Centre Network, 2 Cathedral Square, College Green, Bristol.

Once the route to Padiham is complete, subject to property negotiations it is hoped to extend the path to Great Harwood via Martholme Viaduct.

Pupils see the future

Building well under way on £250m school scheme

WORK on the £250m Building Schools for the Future programme in Burnley and Pendle is well under way.

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

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

At the Shuttleworth College site on Burnley Road in Padiham work is a week ahead of schedule. The old buildings have been demolished and foundations are being laid.

At the Burnley Campus site on Barden Lane a 50-tonne long-reach crane has started erecting giant girders as the structure of the new sixth form centre begins to emerge out of the ground.

At the Pendle Vale College and Pendle Community High School site on Oxford Road Nelson, terracing work which was needed to level-out the sloping ground has been completed on time despite a sustained period of inclement weather.

Excitement will build over the next month as the school really starts to take shape with the completion of the foundations and towering structural steelwork moved into place.

Out with the old, in with the new

THE classroom furniture used by generations of east Lancashire children is to be shipped to Pakistan.

The old desks and chairs, no longer needed here because of a £250m new-school programme, will find a new home with schools in the Gujarat region of Pakistan where pupils are educated without basic equipment.

East Lancashire's programme of new and merged schools are coming about in the Building Schools for the Future programme. The authorities in Pakistan are paying to ship the furniture.



●GLIMPSE: children and staff at Barden Lane Nursery School, Burnley, peer through a hole in the building site fence to see the new school being built next door

Young-worker jobs boost as schools lead regeneration

YOUNG people from east Lancashire have the chance of a future in the building trade thanks to the massive investment taking place in schools in Burnley and Pendle.

The first 20 vacancies for apprentices to work on the project have already been advertised.

Careers evenings drew 80 interested school leavers to find out about job opportunities.

The events were hosted by Lancashire County Council and Catalyst Lend Lease – private sector partners in the £250 million Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme – and held at Marsden Heights Community College and Springfield Primary School.

Catalyst is seeking school leavers aged 16 to 18 to train in construction, management, civil engineering, architecture, information technology, finance, and accountancy or to do trade apprenticeships with sub-contractors.

"We had a lot of interest in both evenings," said David Snowdon, Catalyst's general manager.

"There was a good turnout from the schools and excellent participation from contractors who will be involved in the new buildings."

"The BSF programme is all about community development, aiming to improve academic standards through better schools and also the creation of local employment."

School leavers can apply for the first wave of apprenticeships. For more information contact Connexions in Burnley on 01282 478600 or in Nelson on 01282 613067.

Eco-battlers win war on waste

CHILDREN have claimed a victory in the battle against waste in Lancashire.

Pupils at Quernmore Primary School near Lancaster wrote to supermarkets to ask that they issue fewer plastic carrier bags.

Their eco-campaign took a step forward when Booth's supermarkets agreed to promote reusable bags and look more closely at the number of free bags issued.

Each carrier bag issued takes decades to decompose, so any reduction is a boost to Lancashire's countryside.

Children have also been persuading their parents to use fewer plastic carrier bags.



●JAMIE O'Horo picks up ideas from Claire Ferguson, of Keith Walton Brickwork, at the recent open evening at Marsden Heights Community College in Nelson.

"For these young people it's not only an opportunity for personal development but also to be part of a sustainable community."

The first wave of the 10-year BSF programme involves funding, building and maintaining seven new secondary schools and a sixth form in east Lancashire.

Work started last year on the first three and these will open in September 2008. The remainder will follow in 2009 and 2010.



●KARA Bateson, Booth's customer service manager, with eco-committee members Ben Forber (11), Fergus Walsh (10), Elizabeth Simpson (10), Elizabeth Reade (11).

NEWS IN BRIEF

Royal murder 'trial' at castle

AN interactive drama based on the trial of Richard III following the murders of his nephews – "The Princes in the Tower" – is to be staged in Shire Hall, Lancaster Castle.

Based on known historical fact as well as informed conjecture, this is a premiere of a play by Michael S Bennett. Having heard evidence both for Richard and against, the audience is then invited to decide his guilt or innocence.

The drama has been produced by the acclaimed Demi-Paradise productions and will be premiered over three nights from 3-5 May at 7:30pm.

Tickets cost £12.50 with a limited number available to full-time students at £7. Contact the box office on 01524 64998.

Held to account

SENIOR decision-makers will be open to public scrutiny at Cabinet Question Times in Whitworth and Whalley this month.

County Councillors Hazel Harding, Doreen Pollitt, Chris Cheetham, Marcus Johnstone and Alan Whittaker will answer questions from the public at 7.15pm on Tuesday 22 May at Riverside Community Centre, Market Street, Whitworth.

Whalley Abbey is the venue for Ribbles Valley question time at 7.15pm on Thursday 31 May when county councillors present will include Hazel Harding, Doreen Pollitt, Marcus Johnstone and Tony Martin.

£200 night

SOCIAL services staff teamed up in Rossendale to raise more than £200 for Comic Relief.

Community Support Team staff and clients joined with service users, local hospital staff and people from Making Space and Bacup Road Resource Centre to take over a Rawtenstall social club for a night.

Support for centre

MEMBERS of Burnley's Rosegrove Working Men's Club are planning a darts marathon, snooker events and a raffle to raise cash for nearby Springbank Day Centre.

Staff at the centre plan an annual ball for their clients – and the club members volunteered to help raise the £1,300 needed.

The centre helps people with learning disabilities to lead a full life, which includes support in getting people into work and also in social activities.

Cinema arts group steals the show

A GROUP of young filmmakers from Lancaster has scooped a top national award.

The Youth Arts Cinema is one of only 15 groups in the country to win a prize in the final of the National Youth Challenge Competition, "Actions Speak Louder".

And their award has netted £40,000 of funding to enable them to develop their filmmaking activities.

The winning project, Wells Lab, is a futuristic film dealing with issues of humanity and the chemical industry. All aspects of planning and production have been undertaken by the young people involved.

The group, based at the Dukes Youth Theatre on Moor Lane and run by Lancashire County Council's Youth and Community Service, found out about their win at a glamorous ceremony at the BFI Imax cinema on London's South Bank, attended by the 15 winning projects.

Young People's Minister Beverley Hughes, who presented the awards, said: "The standard of entries has been extremely high."

"It's been really fantastic to see how young people have risen to the Youth Challenge Competition - with creativity, passion and commitment that would put many adults to shame."

The success story began when the Duke's Den group at the youth theatre applied to the Youth Opportunity Fund for a small grant.

Unlike the group's talented young people, the theatre's equipment was putting in a poor performance.

Youth worker Guy Morris said: "We were limited because we didn't have our own editing equipment, and the existing camera was old and had to be shared between all of the Youth Arts Cinema's groups."

Their £6,000 award allowed them to buy the professional equipment needed to take film making up to the next level, including two mini DV cameras, two laptop computers for editing, and also sound recording equipment.

Action not talk - county council leader

Lancashire County Council's leader claims there is little public support for a possible reorganisation of local government in the county.

County Councillor Hazel Harding said: "The government has just closed the door on what was the fourth

examination of Lancashire's boundaries in 14 years.

"Now some MPs want to reopen that debate.

"I know how Lancastrians value their heritage - but equally want quality services and value for money.

"The government's own inspectors have judged

Lancashire County Council as among the best in the country."

Councillor Harding was speaking after some MPs called for a reopening of the debate on a possible local government reorganisation.

Ministers recently rejected change for Lancashire.

Councillor Harding said: "In every debate, it has been the politicians who have been trying to change things. Four councils recently bid unsuccessfully for unitary status.

"In all of this, no one has seriously asked the people of our county what they want.

"I believe they would say

we should just get on with the job of improving their quality of life.

"Changing structures does not necessarily mean improving things.

"A great deal of money has been wasted on this over the years - money that would better be spent on services."

The secret of long life

Stay active and happy - birthday girl Ethel, 100

WHAT have Lawrence Olivier, John Wayne, Katherine Hepburn and Ethel Robinson have in common?

They were all born 100 years ago. And unlike the Hollywood movie stars, Ethel from Lytham is very much alive and kicking.

Ethel, whose husband Albert died 20 years ago, has been a resident at Stanner Lodge extra care sheltered housing scheme in Lytham St Anne's for 16 years and was the first tenant to move into her own flat.

Born in April 1907 and originally from Halifax, Ethel worked in a factory making rifle cases and military equipment during the war.

One of five, her mother died at 93 and her remaining sister still lives in Lytham. She met her husband on holiday in Morecambe and then moved to Lancashire.

Family, friends and staff recently celebrated Ethel's landmark birthday at a special pink-themed party.

Asked what her secret to long life is, she said: "They tell me it's because of my healthy living - as I've never drunk or smoked. I've always enjoyed being active."

A keen tennis player in her youth, Ethel said: "I used to go dancing and loved playing tennis at Sunday school. I still watch Wimbledon on TV every year. I can't walk very far now but I used to be able to walk to town on my own."

Managed by New Fylde Housing, Stanner Lodge was the first extra-care scheme developed in the Fylde in partnership with the county council.

The scheme enables residents to live independently in their own self-contained flat with on-site flexible care available 24hrs a day.

"The staff here are so kind to me", said Ethel. "I get on well with them all. They help me to go downstairs to meet with my friends and play dominoes. You've got to have a laugh and enjoy life."

Mandy Robson, scheme manager, said: "Ethel is very popular and well liked by the other residents and our staff."

"She knows everyone's names and has a great sense of humour."

"As the first resident in the scheme, Ethel's birthday is a particular momentous occasion as her birthday symbolises how this scheme can really support older people as an alternative to residential care."



●HAPPY 100: Ethel is Lancashire's first resident of the county council's extra-care scheme.

Key 1907 facts

- Albert Einstein proposes theory of relativity $E=mc^2$
- Henry Campbell Bannerman is Prime Minister
- Theodore Roosevelt is 26th President of the United States of America
- Australian Norman Brookes becomes first Wimbledon Men's singles champion

- Baden-Powell leads the first scout camp on Brownsea Island
- The first black cabs with taxi meters operate in London
- The Caravan Club was formed
- The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies organise first national demonstration
- Florence Nightingale is awarded the Order of Merit
- Manchester United wins Football League Division One

Petrol checks target bike pests

FILLING stations could be fuelling illegal use of mini-motorbikes by selling petrol to under-16s according to Lancashire Trading Standards.

Councillors on the Lancashire Local Preston committee are backing a campaign urging garages to stick to the law after they received a report from chief trading standards officer Jim Potts.

Trading Standards and police have been taking action over recent months to reduce the availability and use of mini-motos which are not legal for use on roads and pavements.

But Mr Potts told the committee - which makes local decisions on county matters -

that while more illegal and unsafe bikes were being taken off the streets, he had received reports of filling stations selling fuel to minors.

Mr Potts added: "Petrol filling stations require a licence to store petrol and a condition of that licence prohibits sales of petrol to under-16s. To breach the condition is an offence."

Now garage owners are being targeted with a new poster as part of Trading Standards' Age Check campaign reminding they could be prosecuted if caught selling petrol to under-16s.

Trading Standards officers have identified safety problems with a number of

seized mini-motorbikes including inadequate fuel-caps which could leak fuel or vapour causing a fire or explosion risk.

County Councillor Jean Battle, Cabinet member for Community, Planning and Partnerships, said: "Underage sales laws protect young people and communities by restricting access to goods which can lead to anti-social behaviour."

"Filling stations now need to realise that children may be illegally buying petrol to run their mini-motorbikes which could result in prosecution for the licensee."

"I would urge anyone who knows of garages which sell fuel to under-16s to report them to Trading Standards."

Award for child centre

MOVERS and shakers at Lune Park Children's Centre in Lancaster are celebrating their achievements - and some of them are only two years old.

The centre's Mini Movers parent-and-toddler group was runner-up in the Daycare Trust's national annual Partners in Excellence awards.

County Councillor Niki Penney visited the Children's Centre in Ryelands Park to meet the women behind the successful venture which helps mums, dads and toddlers learn to move and have fun together at the city's Ludus Dance Centre.

She said: "I am delighted to be here today to see this fantastic partnership coming together."

GRANTS for Growth changes lives – that's not wishful thinking but a fact and was shown at a recent event to celebrate those who have been helped by the project.

Wendy Dwyer, vice-chairman of Lancashire County Council, welcomed to County Hall more than 60 organisations that have benefited from Grants for Growth.

The money has been used for schemes from drugs and alcohol counselling to training unemployed people to become accredited coaches.

Three organisations and individuals told what they had achieved with Grants for Growth help.

First up was Steve Duffy, a prison warder from Liverpool's Walton Prison. Steve has started a project called Choose Life Lancashire which encourages those who have suffered from addictions to teach of the damage addictions can cause.

From staging plays showing the dangers of substance abuse to educating and advising bodies such as schools and the police, Choose Life Lancashire has given those whose lives have been blighted by addictions the chance to warn and help others of the dangers.

Youth worker Steve Proctor spoke next of his Action for Youth project. Based in Clitheroe, the project was created following a meeting Steve had with young people to ask what they wanted in their area.

They wanted a place where they could go to be with their friends. Steve and his group managed to obtain the lease to a disused garage in Clitheroe and have used Grants for Growth funding to gut the building and remodel it – with tradesmen teaching building and maintenance skills.

The building, which is due to open soon, will feature a cafe, computer room, record-

Thanks a million

Dozens of firms have gained from over-£1m share-out



●HUNDREDS of people have gained: councillors welcome guests - some from Berlin - and social entrepreneurs to the Grants for Growth celebration.

By Mark McAdam

ing studio and a games room.

Finally, Joan Brindle from the Moving on Project spoke. Joan talked about how her project helps those who have suffered difficulties in their lives get back into full-time employment.

Joan then handed over to Graham McGrath, one of those she has helped. Graham spoke of how he suffered from agoraphobia and post-traumatic stress following a vicious attack.

Because of the attack

Graham could not work, became depressed and suffered from substance-abuse problems. After meeting Joan and receiving her help which included taxi fares for him to attend the project, Graham was able to get the help and counselling he needed.

He has become a trained counsellor himself, and started working again in January.

County councillor Wendy Dwyer said: "I am hugely grateful to have had the opportunity to welcome to County Hall so many people who, through the Grants for Growth Project, have been

able to help so many."

County Councillor Hazel Harding, council leader, said: "It was a pleasure to address and meet so many of the people who have received funding from the Grants for Growth project. This is a project that enables people to help others. The scheme is a huge benefit to Lancashire."

And County Councillor Niki Penney, Lancashire County Council's chair, added: "There is still funding available for those organisations and individuals that need it."

"Those who have attended

this event are evidence of the compassion and kindness that abounds in Lancashire and that the Grants for Growth scheme is helping to create."

Grants for Growth is European Social Fund money matched by and made available through LCDL, the county council's economic development department.

CASH HELP AT HAND

These three projects are just the tip of the iceberg of the help that Grants for Growth has provided since its start. The project has awarded more than £1m in funding.

Almost 190 projects have been funded all over the county, 36 of which involve working with young people. Twenty four informal job clubs have been set-up, 12 projects that help develop the skills of disabled people, six homeless projects and 14 women's group.

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 Lancashire County Council's Development Ltd on 01772 551888.

Now is the time to learn

Lancashire County Council will be hosting a series of events in May as part of Adult Learners' Week to inspire people to pursue courses in adult learning.

Adult Learners' Week, from 19-25 May, is a national campaign which promotes education and training for adults, provides access to information and guidance, and aims to motivate more adults to participate in learning opportunities.

Lancashire Adult Learning service and its adult colleges will be encouraging adults across the county to try new courses and learn new skills.

It will also provide a great opportunity for people to learn about the many different courses that are available in their area and across the county.

A number of free taster sessions will be offered in the week.

Whether you want to learn something new, start a new hobby, just out of interest, or you want to gain new skills or qualifications to improve your job prospects, information about the range of courses is available.

For more information on Adult Learners Week and enrolment for courses visit www.lancashire.gov.uk or contact: For Lancaster and Morecambe – 01524 581 269 For east Lancashire – 0845 056 1886 For Preston and south Lancashire – 0845 600 1331

Extra benefits checks lead to £300,000 bonus

A PROJECT set up to help pensioners across Burnley through the benefits maze has been hailed a huge success following additional entitlement pay-outs of more than £300,000 for local residents.

The "Take Up Benefit Check" project was set up last year by Lancashire County Council's Welfare Rights Service in efforts to target and provide tailored benefits checks and advice for pensioners across Burnley.

The main aim of the project was to identify over-65s in need. Areas included Brunshaw, South West Burnley, Burnley Wood,

Bank Hall, Gannow, Trinity and Daneshouse/Stoneyholme.

In particular, people over 70 years of age were targeted.

In addition to providing benefits advice and assisting with claiming benefits, the project endeavoured to help identify other needs that pensioners might have and referred them to the relevant support agencies. This included advice on health and social care support in efforts to improve the quality of life and health of residents.

County Councillor Jean Battle, cabinet member for Community Planning and Partnerships, said: "It is a well-known fact that pensioners are the biggest hard-to-

reach group whereby take-up levels for benefits are low, with many missing out when it comes to making a claim for benefit for a variety of reasons."

In January 2007, Lancashire County Council celebrated 20 years anniversary of its Welfare Rights Service. A splendid £250m of benefits has been raised for people.

Benefits advice and help from the Welfare Rights Service is free and confidential to all Lancashire residents.

For more information or to request a benefit check contact Lancashire Welfare Rights Service on 01282 470570 or visit www.lancashire.gov.uk

Lessons of yesteryear

AN exhibition of slavery – and its abolition – will be held in Preston this month.

The Lancashire County Council-backed display will be staged in the Harris library from 1 to 9 May and then in Plungington youth centre from 9 to 18 May.

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



If you have a child born on or between 1 April 2002 and 31 March 2004 your child is entitled to a free part-time pre-school nursery education place from the start of the Summer Term 2007 commencing in April.

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

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

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

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

University opens doors to elderly

NOW is the time for older adults to sign up to a new range of Lancaster University courses.

Four courses start in June – and each includes a range of opportunities to talk to tutors about study plans and also the possibility of swapping research ideas with other students.

Courses starting next month for older learners – retired or not – are Older People in the Political Process (starts 18 June); Brush Up Your French (starts 4 June); short course Alexander Technique (starts 18 June); Introduction to Information Technology and Computer Animation

(starts 18 June).

Students need not be retired. For more details about the Senior Learners' Programme, or to register, contact the university's Department of Continuing Education on 01524 592623/4 or visit: www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/conted/openstudies



SureStart



100 years of women in politics

Watch out for our informative exhibition at your local library

LANCASHIRE'S fascinating role in the struggle for women's emancipation is to be shown across the county.

Socialist Ramsay MacDonald, writer Bertrand Russell, Conservative Katherine Orme – figures from across the political spectrum have raised the profile of women on Lancashire's public stage over the decades.

But it is 100 years since women got the vote and women still account for far less than half the elected representatives in the county.

The new exhibition, with many exhibits from Lancashire's Record Office, will tour a variety of Lancashire libraries from June until the end of the year.

Exhibits include:
• Letters from suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst to Nelson campaigner Selina Cooper.

• Photographs of Lancashire suffragette meetings.
• Election addresses from the very earliest women election candidates. The concerns they express give a unique insight to the issues of the day.

• A note from Ramsay MacDonald urging Lancashire women to seek influence in the trade union movement.

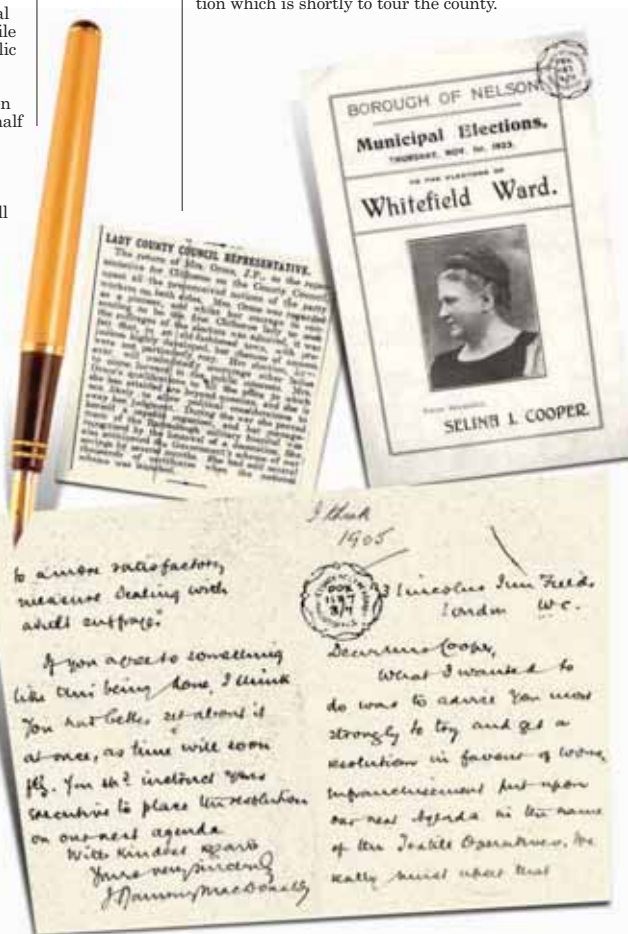
Not all women won the vote in 1907, however, and it was not until after the 1914-18 First World War that all women were given the power of the ballot.

Despite Lancashire's role in fighting for votes for women it was not until 1922 that Lancashire County Council gained its first woman elected member – Katherine Orme who won Clitheroe for the Conservatives.

(Below) ↓
Memorabilia from the fights for women's rights.

The exhibition also features election addresses from Chorley, Nelson and elsewhere.

Lancashire County Council's slow start with regard to women elected to its ranks has changed over the years so that, in the 1990s, the leaders of all three major parties on the county council were women. Women from across local government in Lancashire were invited to County Hall last month for a celebration of women's role in democracy and to preview the exhibition which is shortly to tour the county.



Shop around to cut your power bill

Writes trading standard officer Julian Edwards

WHEN the gas and electricity market were opened up to competition there was a general concern that some customers were confused and misled into changing suppliers. But the new set-up actually provides opportunities for consumers to save money.

Aggressive doorstep selling and

stories about people being swapped to different suppliers without their consent were common and an understandable mistrust about the whole process arose. This is no longer a major problem and many people could be paying considerably more than is necessary. Lancashire consumers could make considerable saving by checking out whether they are on the best tariff and supplier for gas and electricity.

If you were buying a product costing over £500 most consumers will shop around to find the best price. Most households will spend more than this on gas and electricity in a year and exactly the same approach should be used.

Understandably, some consumers have been historically happy with their supplier and have been reluctant to change. However, this can sometimes result in significant cost.

There are now literally hundreds of different charges for gas and electricity available and, while it may seem complex at first, there are organisations available to help.

The best advice must be to shop around and check the price you pay on a regular basis. A deal which is very competitive one quarter may not be so the next. While everyone's usage will be different the range of savings can be considerable, for the medium usage (3500Kw of electricity and 21000Kw of gas per year) gas costs can range from £475 to £709. Electricity cost can range from £279 to £461.

You can check the best deals by contacting Energywatch, the independent gas and electricity watchdog, on 0845 906 0708 or www.energywatch.org.uk who will direct you to one of the accredited price comparison services.

Summer listings



Saturday 5 May
10.30am to 12.30pm. Fun workshop exploring who we are and how we want others to see us. Uses museum's portrait collection as inspiration; create your own self-portrait. Suitable for all the family. Lancaster City Museum 01524 64637.

11am to 11.30am; 1.30pm to 2pm; 3pm to 3.30pm. Wartime Tales of the King's Own told by World War Two reenactor. Suitable all the family. Lancaster City Museum 01524 64637.

Sunday 6 May
Choose one of five guided walks north Lancashire and Yorkshire area, from very strenuous to easy. Organised by DalesRail trains. Details 01200 429832. www.dalesrail.com

Monday 7 May
2pm-4pm. Wizard woodpeckers – learn about the birds that live near Turton Tower. Also, craft activities. Suitable for all the family. Turton Tower. Tel 01204 852203.

Saturday 12 May
Noon-5pm. Free admission as part of National Mills' Weekend. Suitable for all the family. Queen Street Mill Textile Museum, Burnley. Tel 01282 412555.

Sunday 13 May
Noon – 5pm. Free admission as part of National Mills' Weekend. Suitable for all the family. Queen Street Mill Textile Museum, Burnley. Tel 01282 412555.

Sunday 20 May
Choose one of five guided walks north Lancashire and Yorkshire area, from very strenuous to easy. Organised by DalesRail trains. Details 01200 429832. www.dalesrail.com

Saturday 26 May
12.30pm to 3.30pm. Bug Hunt. A hunt for life around the outside of the museum. Draw the creepy-crawly found. Suitable for all the family. Museum of Lancashire, Preston. Tel 01772 534075.

Sunday 27 May
Noon-5pm. A Victorian Bank Holiday. Try aspects of Victorian life, including wash-day and Victorian games. Test your nerves in a class taught by a Victorian-era teacher. Dressing up fun for children and handle Victorian objects. Queen Street Mill Textile Museum, Burnley. Tel 01282 412555.

Choose one of three guided walks north Lancashire and Yorkshire area, from very strenuous to easy. Organised by DalesRail trains. Details

01200 429832, www.dalesrail.com

Monday 28 May
Noon-5pm. A Victorian Bank Holiday. Try aspects of Victorian life, including wash-day and Victorian games. Test your nerves in a class taught by a Victorian-era teacher. Dressing up fun for children and handle Victorian objects. Queen Street Mill Textile Museum, Burnley. Tel 01282 412555.

Get Knotted! A fun session teaching how to tie knots. Suitable for all the family. Lancaster Maritime Museum 01524 382264.

Tuesday 29 May
10.30am to 12.30pm; 1.30pm to 3.30pm. Worse Things Happen at Sea. Workshop looking at local sea heroes. Poems and pictures. Suitable for all the family. Lancaster Maritime Museum 01524 382264.

Wednesday 30 May
Fishy Goings On in the afternoon. Find mermaids/sea creatures hiding in the furniture. Also, craft activities. Suitable for all the family. Turton Tower. Tel 01204 852203.

10.30am to 12.30pm; 1.30pm to 3.30pm. African art and printing. Suitable for all the family. Judges' Lodgings, Lancaster. Tel 01524 32808.

2pm. Kids' activity tour. Ages 5-12, accompanied by adult. Lancaster castle 01524 64998.

Thursday 31 May
10.30am to 12.30pm; 1.30pm to 3.30pm. Viva Mexico! Use exhibition as inspiration and create your own piece of work to take home. Lancaster City Museum 01524 64637.

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 Pknic Site 01254 825187
Lancashire Countryside Service main office 01772 534709
Museums' main office 01772 534061

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*except Lancaster Castle

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Lancashire County Council

Life in Lancashire

So much
to doLancashire textiles –
it died with
a whimper

MEMORIES and records of the textile era that shaped life in east Lancashire are to be recorded in a major two-year project.

Museum staff and former cotton workers are teaming up to piece together a post-1945 history of the industry – an industry that shaped social lives, family life, the appearance of towns and even the fortunes of the nation.

The industry changed massively after the Second World War, including some short-lived booms, the arrival of tens of thousands of migrant workers and its eventual demise. No more than a dozen weaving and spinning firms still exist in the area.

David Chadwick, museum service head of learning and access, said: "The project will generate a huge amount of first-hand information – and it will be recorded for future generations of children and adults.

"If we don't record this information now, these memories will be gone forever. Much history is carried in people's heads and this is a way of unlocking it.

"Recording these experiences gives older people a sense of worth and helps younger people understand where they have come from."

Other industries, such as coal and steel, have suffered similar declines. Their high profiles, however, have meant their fates have been better documented than that of textiles.

Libraries in east Lancashire have already staged exhibitions linked to the "hidden history" project. Visitors have been asked to share their stories through "hard copy" formats such as photographs and written accounts, while other reminiscences have been recorded on tape.

The textile workforce also changed with the arrival of Poles and Italians after the war. Subsequent arrivals included Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.

"Lancashire's textile trade has always been a magnet for new arrivals," David said.

"Many Lancastrians can only trace their county roots back three or four generations because their own forefathers came from elsewhere in Britain – Lancashire used to be, in terms of prosperity, what the south-east is today.

"We truly have a shared heritage.

"We want to take older people into schools and museums to tell young people of their experiences.

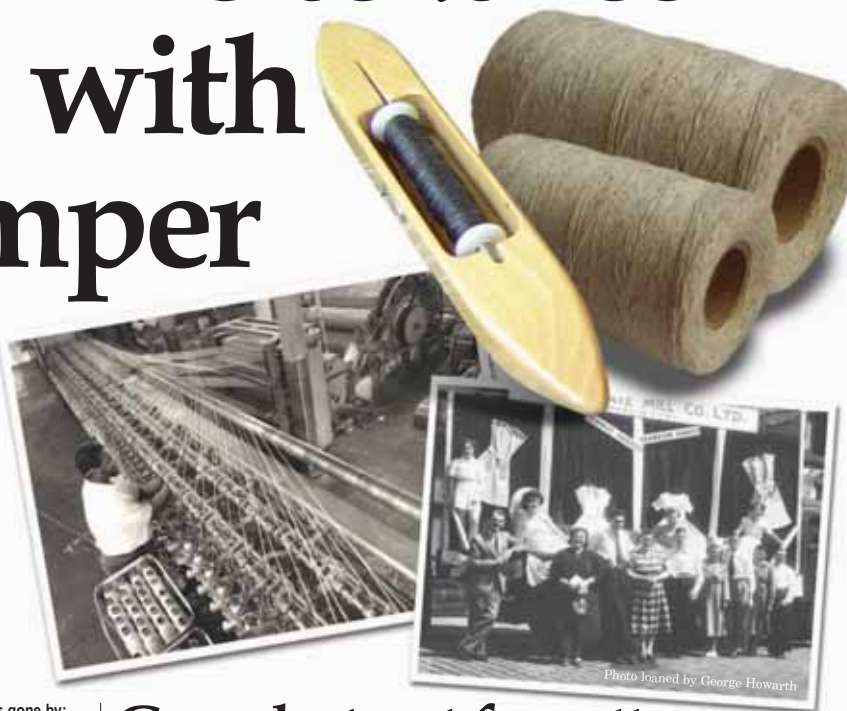
"It is a story that needs to be saved as the industry shaped so many things, from the look of towns to the holidays that people took.

"There used to be a mill on almost every street and some were a third the size of the Titanic.

"We're already calling this a hidden history as changes in textiles were drawn out over such a long period."

The finished project, it is hoped, can be adapted for school use through things such as dance, drama, music, exhibitions and photography.

David added: "Such creative work should not be restricted to schools. People within the voluntary and community sectors should also be involved to help develop a sense of time and place for the descendants of migrant workers."



Days gone by:
our pictures
show textile life
from not too long
ago.

Gone but not forgotten.
Tell us your memories.

THE "hidden history" of textiles could, it is hoped, bring together east Lancashire's varied communities through shared experience.

The industry's 40-year decline means it is now beyond living memory for the third and fourth generations of the indigenous population and also for the second and third generations of economic migrants.

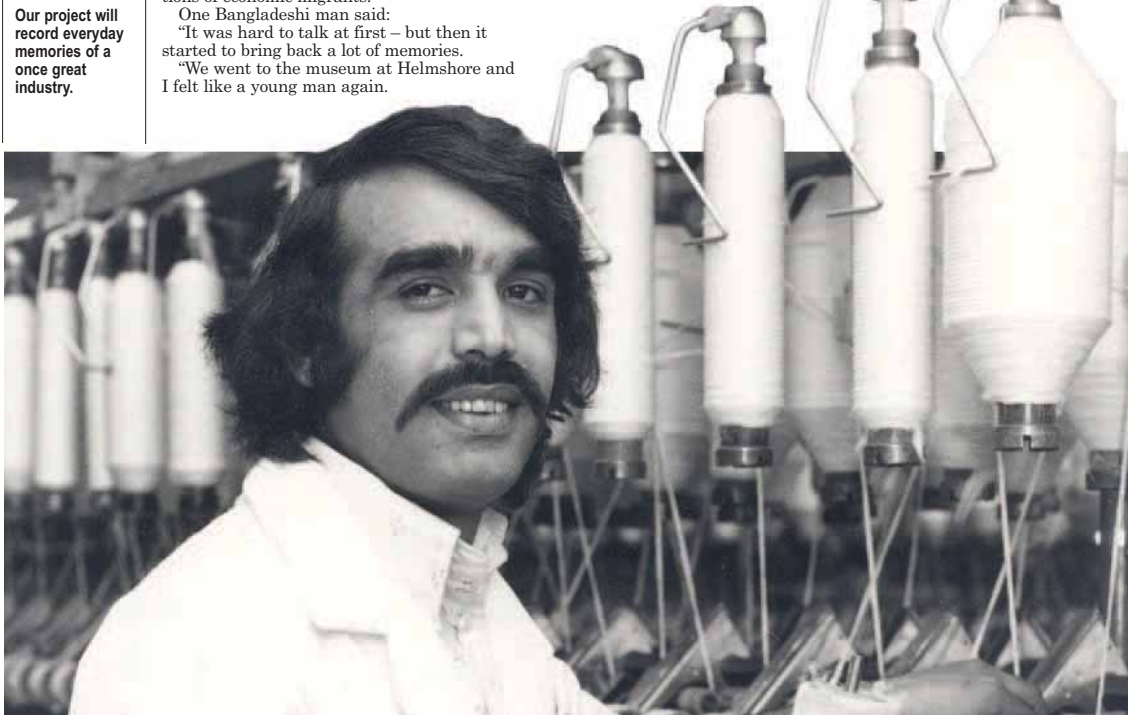
One Bangladeshi man said:

"It was hard to talk at first – but then it started to bring back a lot of memories.

"We went to the museum at Helmsshore and I felt like a young man again.

"I liked the smell of the factory – it brought back so many memories of my working life."

We'd like to talk to anyone with memories of the textile industry in east Lancashire. Tell us your life and experiences – and you will be helping future generations. Ring Rebecca on 01706 226459.



What are your recollections of textiles?

Write to: the editor, Vision, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8XJ or email neil.graham@css.lancscc.gov.uk

Lots to
do this
spring!

WHATEVER the weather, there's plenty to see and do at your local museum and gallery across the county this spring.

From line-dancing – Tudor-style to bug hunts, Victorian games, African art to cloth caps and clogs during National Mills weekend, Lancashire County Council's Museums Service has a fun packed itinerary of events for the family.

A host of activities and events during May has been organised as part of this year's national Museums and Galleries month which takes place from 1 to 31 May.

Many of the events are detailed on page 8.

A number of the county's museums have recently reopened following a spring clean.

These include the Fleetwood Museum, Queen Street Mill Textile Museum in Burnley, Cottage Museum in Lancaster and Gawthorpe Hall in Padiham.

LOOK LIVELY



Brenda Hamer
-customer service officer

LIFE is getting easier for members of the public wanting help from Lancashire County Council.

Some public bodies are infamous for passing people from pillar to post with the simplest inquiry.

Brenda is one of a new breed of county council staff whose job has only one purpose - either getting answers for members of the public or routing them through to someone else who will help.

What does your job involve?

My job is to answer calls from the public about a variety of Lancashire County Council services, including registration services, schools transport and vacancy inquiries.

I also respond to e-mails about Lancashire highways issues and, as a more experienced member of the team, I am involved in coaching and mentoring other staff.

When I am not answering the telephone I also get to work on specific projects within the Customer Service Centre, all aimed at improving the accessibility and quality of our service.

What do you like most about your job?

Without sounding too "cheesy" the best part of my job is being able to help someone who is worried, upset and in need of assistance. In some cases this can be life changing.

What is a typical week?

The day starts with reporting any Lancashire highways issues that have been received via e-mail and forwarding the information to the highways inspector.

This service deals with street lighting repairs (more than 153,000 street lights), highways repairs (more than 3,528 miles of roads), and many other highways-related issues.

I then start answering the telephone which is where the diverse nature of the work is most apparent.

The calls can include Lancashire highways repairs, school transport; NoWcard-concessionary bus travel; Blue Badge application/renewal arrangements; anti-social behaviour on buses; job applications etc.

How did you become a customer service officer?

I've always worked within the customer services arena. Prior to Lancashire this included BT and Littlewoods Home Shopping.

My previous job was more of an administrative role and I really missed the contact with the public.

What is the most memorable call you have ever taken?

One lady called and told me that the door had come off a street light column and the wires were exposed in Warton, near Carnforth.

I reassured her and said that I would ask the engineers to look into this as a matter of urgency.

The engineer attended within the hour and sorted the problem out.

What qualities and strengths do you need to do your job?

I think it's important that you're positive, patient and friendly but also professional and assertive without ever being aggressive.

The ability to have a "happy voice" when you might be having a bad day can be very useful indeed!

Enthusiasm - the pupil's friend



Michele Grimshaw
Science teacher of the year, Marsden Community Primary School, Nelson

I CAME into teaching at a time of great change - the National Curriculum was in the process of being implemented.

Then came literacy and numeracy hours. All these changes brought about many benefits to the standard of education taught in most schools.

As a newly qualified teacher I took all the changes on board and for a time the content of the lesson was sometimes lost in the prescribed structure which we were supposed to follow.

One day I was using an extract from a particularly exciting book and had reached the point where we moved onto a different activity when I looked at

my pupils' faces. They were keen to find out what happened next.

So I read to the end of the book! I waited for the Literacy Police to come and get me but they didn't come.

This taught me a valuable lesson that can be applied to any area of teaching if you are keen and interested this will influence the children and they too will be enthusiastic.

Anyone working in education knows that today's children are usually highly ICT literate. PS2's, Xboxes and MP3 players all rattle off their tongues as easily a Sooty and Sweep did off mine at that age.

There is a wide variety of ICT resources available for use in the classroom

and used wisely and appropriately they are a great stimulus.

But...

There is no substitute for an enthusiastic and knowledgeable teacher. I can talk about science for hours on end. I take any chance to instigate a science experiment.

The same is true of other teachers with other subjects.

With the advent of the Creative Curriculum initiative there is more scope for teachers to teach a subject they enjoy and enthuse about.

Engaging and motivating children in the classroom is challenging but teachers who ooze a passion for their subject have already won a major part of the battle.

Residents refuse to duck the issue

THIS duck has clearly got "tyred" of the state of his local watering hole.

But, there is good news for our feathered friend as residents from Fern Gore in Accrington have teamed up with the county council's Environmental Projects Team to work on plans to transform three disused lodges in the area.

The site was recently acquired by the Fern Gore Residents' Association with the aim of developing it as a community facility.

It will be suitable for use by all residents, including those with disabilities, for recreation and will also provide educational opportunities for schools and local community groups.

Plans for the project have been drawn up through the county council's Community Design scheme and funding is now being sought.

●(Right) DUCK, tyre and parking clamp at Fern Gore.



A mouse for Megan

TECHNOLOGY wizards in Lancashire have been putting their heads together to enable a disabled little girl do what most girls her age want to do - gossip with her friends on the internet.

But the team working with 12-year-old Megan Owen were up against a challenge, as Megan cannot use a computer mouse or keyboard because of her condition.

Now staff at Lancashire's Education Inclusion Service (LEIS) are celebrating a technical first, having "convinced" the joystick on Megan's electric wheelchair that it is in fact a computer mouse - and linking it up to a laptop so Megan can surf the web.

"I am incredibly proud of everyone who has worked together on this," said Maureen Davenport, head of LEIS.

"It is a great example of people from different disciplines looking at a child's individual needs and coming up with a

solution designed just for her.

"It sounds simple, but I know that a huge amount of work went into this as it had never been done before. And as Megan's condition deteriorates, the team will keep adjusting the system so it continues to meet her needs for as long as possible."

Megan, who has a form of spinal muscular dystrophy and lives at Hoghton with her parents and older sister, cannot stand or sit without support and has only a small amount of use of her right hand.

When attending school, she has to rely on teaching assistants to help her use technology to take part in lessons.

This often made use of scanning - a laborious method of selecting different options on the screen using a switch. Because she was not able to use a mouse, it also meant that she could not use any computer programmes independently.

Megan's parents were keen for staff to try to find ways for her to continue to communicate independently and via technolo-

gy like her peers. Megan can make herself understood verbally, though it helps if people know her well and are familiar with her speech.

And so weeks of hard work began, led by Barry Breslin, senior ICT technician at LEIS, and including input from Megan's parents, physiotherapists and occupational therapists, the SEN team, wheelchair engineers and a number of software and hardware companies from all over the UK and - in one instance - Canada.

Barry said: "One of the things we learned was that for pupils like Megan to be included, agencies have to co-operate together. That may sound obvious but it can be difficult, lengthy and expensive to put into practice.

"But it has all been worthwhile. Megan can now email her friends independently, which is very important at her age, use the internet and write without adult support. Our next goal is for her to be able to use an X-Box games console through her joystick."

£445,000 new look for centre

A COMMUNITY day centre for adults with mental health problems in Burnley has reopened after a £445,000 makeover to improve facilities.

The Fernandes Centre at North Street in Burnley is owned and run by Lancashire County Council.

The centre provides a range of community services for around sixty adults (aged 18-64) with long term and enduring mental health problems across Burnley and Padiham, including those with mixed anxiety and distress, depression and phobias.

Ready to help you

Get a face-to-face response to your council inquiries

GET your county council queries answered in person.

Do you find it difficult to contact us by telephone? Do you have difficulty accessing the internet?

Would you prefer to have the option of being able to pop into your local school, library, district council office, etc. knowing that a trained and friendly officer will be there to help?

Well soon you'll be able to do just that.

The face-to-face aspect of Lancashire County Council's Customer Access Strategy is now being planned.

This means that you will soon be able to go into designated local facilities and get help using the internet or telephone to access county council services and also talk face-to-face to a trained customer service officer, who will help you to get the answer to your query.

The county council recognises that not everyone wants, or is able, to use the telephone or internet.

This face-to-face service aims to assist those people who prefer to sit down and talk in person to someone.

Research and analysis is currently taking place to ensure that the most appropriate venues are chosen to ensure we meet the needs of those people and communities for whom face to face service is crucial.

County Councillor Doreen Pollitt, county council deputy leader, said: "This is a very exciting development for improving access to services for the people of Lancashire."

"We know that for many customers using the telephone or internet is not an option, so the face-to-face provision that will be provided across the county should make accessing council services much easier for those customers."

Looking for a job?

Getting a job working for Lancashire County Council has now been made that much easier.

The vast majority of applications are now available for completion and submission via an online facility, thereby reducing the time and cost it can often take to print, post, complete and return forms.

Details of Lancashire County Council job vacancies can be accessed at: www.lancashire.gov.uk/vacancies

A further improvement to the job vacancies system is that all associated telephone calls, including advice about the online process or any general inquiries, will now be dealt with by the Customer Contact Centre at the Red Rose Hub.

If you need help or advice on an online application for a county council job, contact 0845 053 0008.

New county High Sheriff



LANCASHIRE'S new High Sheriff was officially sworn in recently.

Mrs Ruth Roderick Winterbottom from Caton, near Lancaster, continues an office stretching back to the middle of the 10th century. The High Sheriff is appointed by Her Majesty The Queen in Her right as Duke of Lancaster.

Mrs Winterbottom said: "I am privileged yet humbled to hold this prestigious position."

●WELCOME: Mrs Winterbottom is congratulated on her appointment by county council Chairman Terry Burns.

Go out and about with DalesRail

A NEW free leaflet has been launched to help you get more out of the Dales by rail this summer.

The full-colour DalesRail 2007 guide is now available.

The special train service takes in some of Lancashire and Yorkshire's finest countryside and stops at some of the most picturesque towns and villages in the Dales.

There are plenty of attractions on offer

along the route at many of the villages and towns, where you can explore local history, or simply enjoy a leisurely day out browsing in local shops or enjoying a relaxing pub lunch.

For the more active, guided walks take in the breathtaking countryside and hills.

Fares start at £15.50 for adults, £7.75 for children, with discounts available for groups.

The service runs on Sunday 6 May, 20 May until 1 July and then

from 29 July until 9 September 2007.

DalesRail is a joint venture between Lancashire County Council, Northern Rail and the Rail Ramblers.

For more information about DalesRail contact 01200 429832.

Timetables are also available from your local County Information Centre, Tourist Information Centre or railway station.

Further details are also available online at www.dalesrail.com

Working in Lancashire

Lancashire County Developments Ltd
The county council's economic development department

Funding boost for Carnforth businesses

OVER £100,000 of funding is to be made available for small to medium businesses in the Carnforth area to encourage expansion.

The funding is jointly provided by Lancashire County Council's economic development company Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL) and the North West Regional Development Agency through the Market Towns Initiative run by the Carnforth Area Regeneration Partnership. LCDL will administer the funds that will enable companies to expand their business.

The funding can help to fund capital and revenue expenditure such as new machinery or equipment, new or upgraded business premises, staff training, advertising, websites and much more.

Small and medium sized enterprises within Carnforth's ten parishes are eligible for the

grants. The fund is open now and will accept new applications until 31 August 2007.

There is no specific upper limit to how much can be applied for, and grants can typically be made available up to a maximum of 40% of total project costs.

Lancashire County Councilor Niki Penney, Chair of LCDL, said: "Helping

companies in the Carnforth area in this way will enable them to expand their business and bring more investment and jobs into these parishes.

"LCDL specialises in funding that allows companies to grow which helps bring investment into all areas of the county and helps improve people's lives."

For more information on applying for a grant please the Programme Manager, Ed Hughes on (01772) 551888 for more details, or email ehughes@lcdl.co.uk



How 'intelligent' is your business?

DO you want to improve your company's performance and profitability? Then take your pick from two free events which are not to be missed for existing businesses or budding entrepreneurs wishing to realise the benefits of adopting the latest technology and internet solutions.

The first event is on 16 May at the Harris Knowledge Park, Fulwood, Preston.

Using a combination of presentations, video, animation, live interviews and audience interaction, these sessions will introduce some of the latest tools which businesses are using to improve their productivity, free up valuable time, reduce overheads and increase your business.

The positive impact that technology can have in all areas of your business will be demonstrated. You'll learn the business case, the costs, the impacts, the benefits and the pitfalls.

These Northwest Regional Development Agency events, organised by business presentation specialists, Junction YK – in partnership with respected organisations and agencies in Lancashire – will give businesses a common sense look at the opportunities on offer.

Lancashire County Developments Limited, the economic development department of Lancashire County Council, will be on hand to show businesses how they can be helped through Rosebud Finance – a flexible loan which can be accessed by any new or growing business in Lancashire, or by any relocating into Lancashire, including social enterprises and community based enterprises. Rosebud loans range from £5,000 to over £100,000 and offer competitive rates. No business is too large or too small to qualify.

How to do business electronically with Lancashire County Council will be one of the areas covered at the event.

LCC's Procurement Manager Ingrid Pinn, who specialises in e-procurement, will be talking at the event.

Other exhibitors, including commercial suppliers and professional business advisors will be present to give advice on how to make the most of opportunities which may be right for your business.

Lancashire County Councilor Niki Penney, Chair of LCDL, said: "The constant innovation of technology coupled with the incredible rise of internet use now underpin many more intelligent approaches to the way we do business every single day. By adopting some 'intelligent' business solutions, businesses can witness real benefits to their profitability. Some of the changes are simple, others are more complex, often cost little or nothing but can really improve business".

The event will run in the morning and is free to attend. To book your place or for further details please visit www.intelligentbusiness.org

To find out more about LCDL or Rosebud Finance, give us a call on 01772 551888 or visit www.lcdl.co.uk

Lancashire County Developments Ltd.

Lancashire
County Council

Watchdog praise for rescue plan

LANCASHIRE County Council's efforts on behalf of ill-treated workers have been singled out by Audit Commission public spending watchdogs.

About 200 Polish workers were left without work and with the threat of being made homeless last year when

factory work contracts were ended prematurely.

Lack of knowledge about employment law, housing law and benefits entitlements left them penniless. Some took to sleeping on the streets.

The episode, in the Accrington area, has been singled out as an example of good work by the Audit Commission

after Lancashire County Council, Hyndburn Council, police, Jobcentre Plus, the Catholic church and others teamed up to help.

Many still owed money to the agency that brought them to England.

More than 20 per cent of the workers were helped into new jobs within five months and a new self-help group

of Poles is helping them understand their legal rights.

Workers are also helped to save for the future by a credit union.

The lessons learned in Accrington are being spread across the county and – thanks to the Audit Commission – across the nation.

World of work beckons for newcomers

POLISH workers are being helped to a brighter future by the county council's adult learning tutors.

The tutors are setting up English classes in the Hyndburn area to help workers take their place in English society.

They meet socially at St Joseph's RC Church in Accrington and more than 60 of them now attend a series of classes that will continue at least until summer.

Andrea Cowton, one of the course organisers, said: "These are often skilled and qualified people who need the English language as a passport to taking a full part in English life."

"Without English they can be unaware of the legal rights that everyone else takes for granted as workers and as citizens."

"Some are parents and need the language for their children's sakes."

Contact 01254 222730 for course details.



●GET ahead: tutor Pam Barton teaches English to Joanna Brodzik and Greg Sidek.

No charge for badges

ALL application and renewal fees for Blue Badge parking permits have been abolished from February.

Fees for online applications were abolished some time ago.

Improvements to Lancashire County Council's customer access strategy now mean that written and telephone applications are also now free.

The badges allow people who are registered blind or have mobility problems to park near shops, stations and other facilities.

Approximately 24,500 Blue Badge applications and renewals are made each year.

People can apply by contacting the county council's customer service centre on 0845 0530049, by visiting www.lancashire.gov.uk or by picking up an information pack at a local social services office.

Learn from the past

CHORLEY Central Library welcomed youngsters and their families this April to a Showcase of Second World War memorabilia last month.

The special collection of Chorley during the war years included old photographs, newspaper articles and air raid precaution lamps.

Safe buses for all, thanks to Frank

THERE'S a new blockbuster on the way featuring a new breed of hero... who drives a bus.

"Frank Foster – Superstar" is the name of a new training DVD which is being filmed specially for bus drivers.

Ordinary bus driver, Frank, teams up with school pupil Alex to discuss how problems such as litter or rowdy behaviour on the bus should be tackled.

Everyday procedures such as checking the vehicle is safe to use before setting off are also in the storyline.

The film is the latest in a

series of innovations pioneered in Lancashire by the county council's Safer Travel Unit to make travelling on public transport a better experience for all.

Rick Wilson, Safer Travel Unit Manager, said: "This is the first time anything like this has been done by the unit. The DVD is very useful as it tackles all the important issues that bus drivers face each day."

"Training videos can often be unrealistic. But Frank Foster is actually played by Tim Paley, someone who has 20 years experience of driving buses as well as having parts in

Emmerdale, Heartbeat and Phoenix Nights.

"It's also been written by the Safer Travel Unit to cover local problems."

"There is so much technology available to bus companies these days to make journeys safer and more pleasant."

"Many vehicles are now kitted out with CCTV, which is a great help, and this DVD will give drivers' added confidence and knowledge."

"Most importantly it will underline our key messages to support them in their work."

It is envisaged that the

majority of Lancashire bus operators will show the DVD as part of formal training for their employees. However, each of the county's 5,000 bus drivers will receive a personal copy, via their employer, of the DVD to watch at their leisure.

The project also has the support of bus operators, the police and trade union representatives.

The DVD was shot entirely on location in Lancashire by Pleased Sheep Productions; with casting support from Our Lady Queen of Peace High School, Skelmersdale.

New law will affect vulnerable

EVERY day we make decisions about our lives.

People may have difficulties making some decisions due to dementia, a learning disability, a mental health problem or medical condition.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 came into force last month and sets out the legal rights for supporting and protecting vulnerable people who do not have the mental capacity or ability to make their own decisions.

This includes financial matters, social care, medical treatment, and everyday decisions about personal care.

The law makes clear who can take decisions, in which situations, and how they should go about this. It also enables people to plan ahead for a time when they may lose mental capacity.

For more information visit www.lancashire.gov.uk or contact your local social services office.

DNA detectives on food safety trail

A TEAM of Lancashire County Council scientists will use DNA tests to check whether food is contaminated after winning a cash award from the Food Standards Agency.

Lancashire County Laboratory is developing techniques to test whether genetically modified ingredients or potentially harmful products are being served up by restaurants and take-aways or sold by other retailers.

As the best equipped council laboratory in the North West, scientists at the facility provide a service to Trading Standards and Environmental Health services across the region.

The £9,000 grant has paid for a new instrument, called a bioanalyser, which can single out individual DNA strands and help to identify the origin of thousands of products.

County Councillor Jean Battle, Cabinet member for Community Planning and Partnerships, said: "Genetics is the science of the 21st century and this equipment will allow the laboratory to keep up to date with food fraud and the contamination problems associated with genetic modification of food crops."

"People's concern over genetically modified ingredients means food must be correctly labelled and we will soon be able to test whether manufacturers are complying."

Project plants mental health roots



●HIVE worker Wayne Hallam felling trees.

A NEW woodland project taking root in Burnley is bringing peace, better prospects and an improvement in the mental health of local people.

A team from the Hive, an occupational therapy service at Burnley General Hospital, has been planting trees at Crow Wood Leisure Centre and improving a wooded area at Coke Oven by felling small trees.

The events were organised by the Lancashire Woodlands Project to improve the local environment and help the Hive workers develop new skills and work towards independent living.

Andrew Statham, a Hive worker, said: "It's nice to give something back to nature."

"Being in nature makes me feel calm and relaxed. It would be nice to visit Crow Wood again in 30 years to see how our woodland has grown."

The planting included native trees such as oak, ash and alder and a hawthorn hedgerow.

The conservation work involved felling some small trees.

The increased light levels on the ground will encourage a range of wild flowers to grow and encourage birds and butterflies to use the woodlands.

Paul Bullimore, of the Lancashire Woodlands Project, said: "The team have been great to work with and a big help in creating and managing woodlands which the public can enjoy."

"They have learned practical woodland skills and had a really enjoyable time into the bargain."

"I am currently looking at ways to develop their skills further through more formal training leading to nationally recognised qualifications."

"The work was carried out in partnership with the Forest of Burnley and Lancashire County Council Countryside Service."