



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

April 2007

Providing • education • highways • trading standards • social services

LANDMARK

Thousands of daffs
for beauty spot

Page 5

BOND CAR

We have a licence
to thrill

Page 5

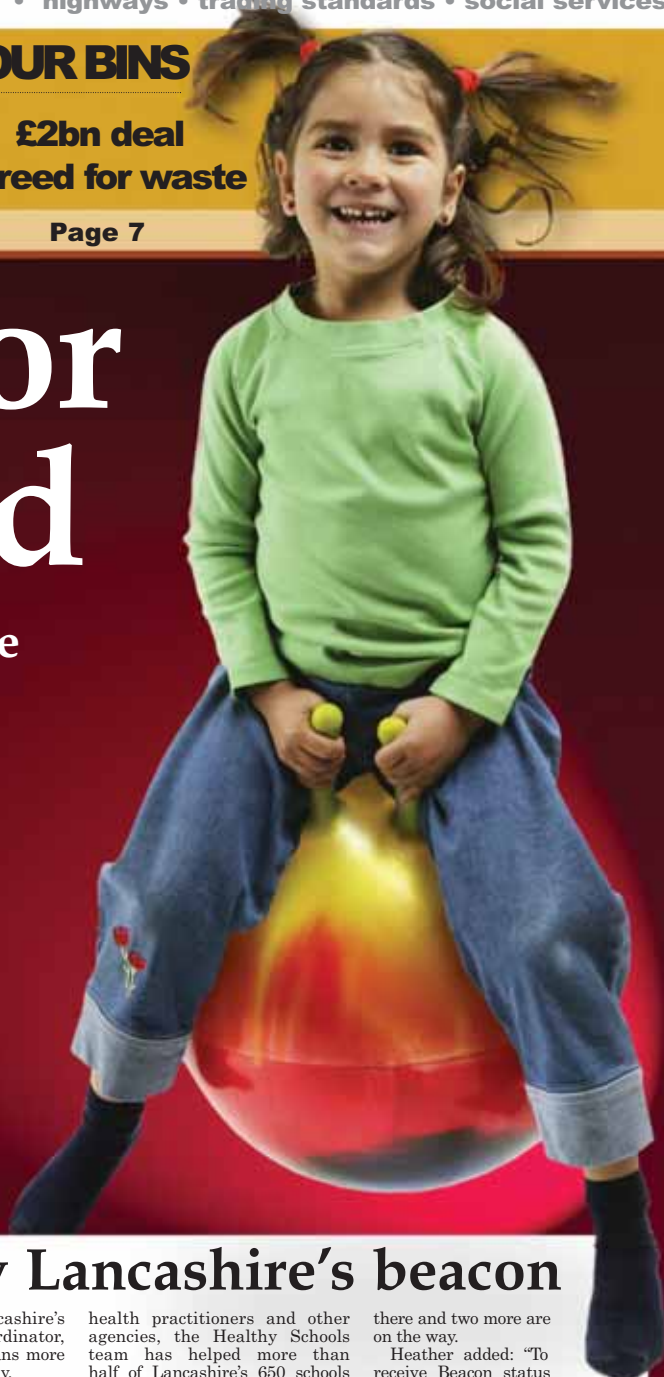
YOUR BINS

£2bn deal
agreed for waste

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Support for every child

- recognition when children achieve
- healthy lifestyles for all
- all schools smoke-free
- an end to bullying
- healthy eating
- water easily available
- physical activity at school each week



Britain's schools told to copy Lancashire's beacon

THE FOUNDATIONS have been laid for a healthier Lancashire of the future.

Years of hard work to encourage young people to lead healthier lives are paying off with hundreds of schools reaching government targets.

Physical activity, emotional well-being, learning about being safe and looking after each other are now part of the curriculum to

make children healthier, stronger and safer not just at school but throughout their adult lives too.

The Healthy Schools programme – which aims for 85 per cent of Lancashire schools to reach healthy status in the next two years – has resulted in Beacon status being awarded to the county council, setting it apart among similar schemes elsewhere.

Beacon status is a reward for good work – but also means other councils nationwide are told to study Lancashire's example.

Heather Hardy, Lancashire's Healthy Schools' co-ordinator, said: "Being healthy means more than eating an apple a day.

"Schools have embarked on a wide range of activities including eating and drinking well, anti-bullying campaigns, safety advice and discussions about drugs, growing up and relationships.

"We are also throwing out unhealthy vending machines and, of course, all schools are now totally smoke-free."

Working hand-in-hand with

health practitioners and other agencies, the Healthy Schools team has helped more than half of Lancashire's 650 schools win their national Healthy School plaques, which will be presented in April.

Lancashire County Council's own version of healthy school status is even more stringent.

It features no fewer than a dozen standards that schools can work towards.

Those achieving all 12 become flagship schools. Four are already

there and two more are on the way.

Heather added: "To receive Beacon status is fantastic for everyone who has been involved.

"When I started my career I always aspired to make a difference.

"With the Healthy Schools programme, I can really see that difference – when I see what schools have produced over the past five years and the improvements they have made, it is phenomenal."

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.

Skip trouble

Mrs D from Scorton writes:

We are hoping to hire a skip over the Easter holidays as we are planning to landscape our front garden.

There is no room on our drive for a skip so we will need to have it positioned on the roadside.

I have been told by a friend that we will need to apply for a skip permit. How do we go about this?

Any skip placed on the public highway requires permission but you don't need to worry about applying for a skip permit. It is actually the skip company that needs to apply for the permit not the householder.

The company will contact Lancashire Highways and if a permit is required it will be issued to the skip company.

Easy access

Ms G from Ormskirk writes:

I have severe arthritis and problems with my hip and back, I am also a Blue Badge holder.

When reversing from my drive my car drops down the pavement and hurts my back. I have made enquiries about getting the kerb dropped but I can't afford to pay the full amount required.

Can I get some help towards the fee?

If you are registered disabled, the Highways department may provide a dropped kerb to get to your property without charge to you.

You should contact your local social services office who will verify that you are registered disabled.

Please contact the Lancashire County Council's Highways department on **0845 053 0011** for more information.

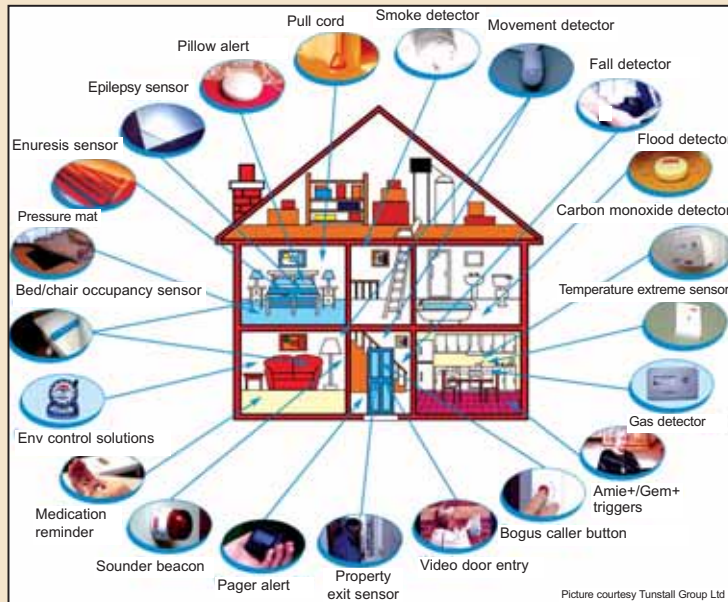
Childcare puzzle solved

Ms M from Ingol writes:

My son is seven months old and I am due to return to work after my maternity leave so I need to arrange childcare for him.

How do I go about finding a child-minder or nursery?

You can get all the information you require from the Lancashire Childcare Information Service. They provide accessible



●TELECARE help is at hand where you live: see "care in your home" below.

and impartial information on childcare services, resources and issues.

They can provide information and advice on choosing the right childcare for your child. Contact them on **0800 195 0137**.

You can also search online for local childcare at www.childcarelink.gov.uk/lancashire where you will find information of up-to-date contacts and availability of a wide variety of childcare solutions.

Care in your home

Mr F from Skelmersdale writes:

My mum's mobility is restricted and she relies on her wheelchair.

I saw the article on high-tech gadgets for older people in February's edition of Vision. I think the video door-entry system would help greatly.

I would like to know if she would have to have other equipment as well and also if there would be a service charge for these items.

The Telecare service as supplied by Lancashire County Council is unfortunately not yet fitting video door entry systems as part of the packages, although there are plans to do so in certain areas later.

There are however several commercial suppliers of video door-entry systems.

All Telecare support packages will be built around the "HomeHub", the device by which any alarm call is sent, so no systems are being installed without this device.

If an assessment by social services shows that a person meets the criteria for social care then the required equipment will be provided free of charge. However there will be a weekly charge of £8.86.

School dinner feast

Mrs S from Nelson writes:

How we used to love school meals, the school at the top of our street used to cook for all our towns' schools. I remember having a really hot meal and a lovely pudding.

My daughter has three children and she says school meals are now too expensive so she provides them with a packed lunch.

I suggest that children are given free school meals.

Also do the teachers pay for theirs?

I also loved school dinners. I adored the puddings; Manchester tart, cornflake pie and custard, semolina with jam. Weren't they delicious!

Today's school meals are also tasty, healthy and nutritious. They offer choice and variety and represent excellent value for money. Nutritional standards are defined by the government.

Free school meals are already provided for children whose families are in receipt of social security benefits such as Income Support or income-based Job Seeker's Allowance. This is a national policy therefore free school meals cannot be granted for all children.

Teachers however do have to pay for theirs.

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.

Money up for grabs in road contest

A NEW competition is aiming to get primary and secondary school pupils to think more about road safety issues.

Pupils are being asked to put their thinking caps on to produce a creative piece of work based on the theme of "road safety is no accident".

The piece of work can come in any form from short story and poem to a poster or even a piece of music.

The competition will be split into four categories - key stages 1, 2, 3 and 4, with one prize for each group up for grabs. The winning entries will receive £150 for their schools.

The competition will open on 23 April to coincide with the first United Nations Global Road Safety Week. The objectives are:

- To raise awareness about the social impact of road traffic injuries.

- To promote action around key factors, which have a major impact on preventing road traffic injuries: seat belts, helmets, drink driving, speeding and infrastructure.

While the focus of the week will be on young road users, it is hoped that the actions resulting from the week will benefit road users of all ages.

The county council's road safety adviser Clare Farrer said: "The Global Road Safety Week is extremely important as 3,000 people and 500 children are killed on the world's roads every day.

"Through our competition we aim to get children thinking and talking about road safety issues and, hopefully, they will share this knowledge at home."

Details and rules, from 23 April, at: www.lancashire.gov.uk/roadsafety or on 0800 328 1635.

New funeral services for non-religious

LANCASHIRE County Council's Registration Service has introduced a civil funeral service.

A civil funeral is a non-statutory service with the aim of offering a dignified yet formal non-religious ceremony.

The ceremony will be conducted by a ceremony director who will have undertaken professional training.

The ceremony director will work closely with the family of the deceased, or the funeral director, to help deliver a personal ceremony.

Steve Lloyd, Registration Services manager at Lancashire County Council, said: "We are confident there is a need for civil funerals in Lancashire for people who do not necessarily want a religious ceremony, but an occasion professionally conducted and designed to meet the wishes of each individual family."

The cost of a civil funeral ceremony will be £95.

For more information about the services offered by the Lancashire Registration Service visit www.lancashire.gov.uk or contact your local Register Office on 0845 053 0021.



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

www.lancashire.gov.uk/vacancies

Lancashire County Council

NEWS IN BRIEF

£450m start for schools

STRUCTURES have now been approved for a £450m blueprint to renovate or rebuild at least half of Lancashire's primary schools.

The schools' overhaul will ensure all pupils are taught in purposely designed buildings within 15 years.

The process, however, can only take place if proper governance structures are in place and councilors have now established a Strategic Advisory Board, a "core team" and Cabinet committee to co-ordinate plans.

County Councillor Alan Whittaker, Lancashire County Council's school's chief, said: "It is important that the process is planned properly. This early spadework will pay off by ultimately speeding up the improvements."

The scheme, called the Primary Capital Programme, will be to primary schools what the much-heralded Building Schools for the Future programme already is in some areas for secondary schools.

Date set for inquiry

THE planning inquiry into the Heysham M6 Link Road will take place this summer.

A start date of Tuesday 3 July was put forward by the Planning Inspectorate and has been agreed by the county council.

County Councillor Tony Martin, cabinet member for sustainable development, said: "We believe it is important for all concerned that this matter is resolved as quickly as possible."

"Whatever your views on the link road, it is important that a resolution is reached."

The inquiry is expected to last for approximately 24 days and will be held in the area.

Diary date

AN INFORMATION day for carers and parents of children with special needs will be held in Burnley from 11am to 3pm on Saturday 28 April.

The East Lancashire Care and Share Group activity will be at St Peter's Centre on Church Street.

More details from Amina Iqbal on 01254 220569 or Dawn Helm on 01772 532509.

All change

THE ever-changing nature of Fleetwood, from holiday haven to fishing port, will be explored in craft-based workshops this month at Fleetwood Museum. Sessions, suitable for all the family, will be held on Fridays 6 April and 13 April. Each session will look at a different period of the town's history. Details on 01253 876621.

All hail birthday girl Hilda, 106

ONE of Britain's oldest residents celebrated her 106th birthday at a county council care home in March.

Hilda Nichols was still living independently until January when she was welcomed into Preston's Falcon House Home for Older People.

Her special day was marked with yet another telegram from the Queen as well as a visit from civic dignitaries and town crier Mike Chapman.

Hilda revealed that the secret of a long life is always to keep active - she enjoyed riding motorbikes until well into her 60s.

Hilda was born in 1901 in Ulverston, Cumbria, the youngest of three children.

She went to school in Holker, at the same time working for the family-owned grocers shop.

Her love of motorbikes began when she met her husband Alfred who worked at a garage across the road from where she lived.

In 1933 they had a daughter

Kathleen who was evacuated to Flookborough to live with Hilda's parents when war broke out six years later.

The family came to live in Preston in 1954.

Hilda said: "I still enjoy life and I'm very comfortable and happy where I'm living now."

"My earliest memory is getting up early every morning before school to go and deliver little packages of yeast because people used to bake in those days. I walked a long way up and down dale."

Hilda's granddaughter Pauline added: "I couldn't ask for any more from the staff at Falcon House as I know she's getting all the care she needs."

"She's had a great day today thanks to the management and staff. These places really are needed."



BIKER: Hilda in her younger days.



● HAPPY birthday: town crier Mike Chapman brings birthday greetings to Hilda.

Cash boost for 'New Deal' carers

CARERS across the county are to receive extra support following a multi-million-pound package announced by Whitehall.

Details of the "New Deal for Carers" were unveiled last month, outlining a range of measures designed to recognise the essential work done by carers across the country.

An extra £33m will improve support for carers who look after family and friends who are frail, disabled or chronically ill.

It includes:

- £25m to be spent on providing short-term home-based respite for carers in crisis or emergency situations in every council;
- £3m towards the establishment of a national helpline for carers;
- a wide-ranging review of the 1999 national carers' strategy;
- £5m to support the development of an

experts carers' programme.

Lancashire County Council has welcomed the announcement which will affect the range of support for carers including respite care, residential short breaks, day care, home care and community support.

County Councillor Chris Cheetham, Cabinet member for Adult and Community Services, said: "This is recognition of the vital role carers make in looking after family and friends who are unable to manage on their own without help."

"Details of exactly how much Lancashire's many carers will get have not been confirmed yet but we are hopeful - as one of the largest local authorities in the country - we will get a healthy slice of this windfall."

"It is important we continue to listen to carers."

"We must further develop local services

that focus on supporting and meeting the needs of carers, not just the person they care for."

It is estimated that there are over 124,000 unpaid carers in Lancashire, representing almost 11 per cent of the population. Approximately 1,300 of them are young carers.

The county council supports seven carers' projects for adults and young carers' projects across the county providing locally based information and support to carers.

Carers receive vouchers so they can buy home care and respite breaks according to their assessed needs.

For more details about support for carers in Lancashire visit www.lancashire.gov.uk/carers

Sign up for harmony



THE horrors of the holocaust have been commemorated on behalf of the people of Lancashire by the county council leader.

Councillor Hazel Harding signed a statement of commitment as part of Holocaust Memorial Day to help ensure that people do not forget the evils of racism.

She said: "We must ensure that future generations remember the victims of the holocaust and those who survived."

"We must do all we can to educate young people about this event."

School buses 'cost £5,000 per pupil'

SOME of Lancashire's most heavily subsidised school buses are being stopped after figures showed subsidies adding up to £5,000 per pupil.

A total of 74 bus services, however, have been saved or amalgamated, with 13 routes no longer continuing.

Changes will take effect from September, and will result in yearly savings of around £677,000.

County Councillor Tony Martin, Cabinet member for Sustainable Development, said: "A number of these buses were highly under-used compared to the cost of the service."

"One Fylde route was being subsidised by £25,000 per year for an average of just six pupils per journey."

"Another route in Preston was being subsidised by £25,000 for an average of just five students and another in Pendle was being subsidised by almost £36,000 for an average nine students."

"It is a very difficult decision to

remove any school buses. We have looked at alternative routes and other options and listened to comments from schools, parents, Lancashire Locals and councillors, but these buses were unfortunately not used enough to make them sustainable."

The county council's criteria for school bus routes means that any route must cover 40 per cent of its costs through ticket revenue. Where possible some services have either been combined or rescheduled to ensure they meet the criteria.

Any route failing to meet the financial criteria was considered against the following areas:

- Alternative public transport routes.
- Alternative walking routes.
- Age of the pupils.
- Whether the pupils are attending their nearest suitable school.
- School travel plans.

Any comments made by the Lancashire Local committees were also considered as part of the process.

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.





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

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

Climate change and how Lancashire can play its

part in countering it is still dominating our postbag - with views that are for and against the plan!

You're Telling Us is your

forum, your chance to say what Lancashire County Council should be doing.

The subject is up to you, so get writing.

Time for a cool debate on climate

VISION'S article about climate-warming (Feb) leads me to ask a few questions. Are you implying that less snow would be a bad thing? The child in me loves the idea of more snow. However, even I must admit that it is disruptive to the economy.

Secondly, increases in temperature should be welcomed, especially when we consider the cold conditions many OAPs find themselves in each winter.

Climate change is certainly happening. It always has. The main reason, as I learned while studying physical geography at university, is Milankovitch's theorem on climate forcing.

Namely, the earth's orbit around the sun varies every 100,000 years, as does its angle (every 41,000 years) and the planet also wobbles on its axis (every 23,000 years). This has always caused climate fluctuations.

In fact, only 15,000 years ago northern Europe had a major freezing event.

Sea-level change is also a fact. However, it has more to do with isostatic change (England sinking as Scotland's highlands rise) than it does the earth's eustatic sea change.

Contrary to popular belief, under 0.04 per cent of the air we breathe contains carbon dioxide - an increase of about 0.01 per cent in the last 100 years. In contrast, 70 per cent of the greenhouse effect is caused by water vapour - steam.

I am not anti-green (I recycle everything I can get my hands on) and think it is essential we stop the huge pollution coming from the US, China and developing countries.

Let us have an open and frank debate and accept that man-made climate change is only half the story. It is typical human arrogance to believe that in so few years we could make such an impact - we really aren't that clever compared to mother nature.

DAVID TURNER BSc MSc

■Mr Turner's letter refers to Lancashire County Council's plan to reduce Lancashire's "carbon footprint" by reducing the council's own carbon emissions and also by encouraging citizen and business use of turbines, solar panels and biofuels. It is a precautionary policy as no one can yet know for sure where climate change will lead - editor.

AS a 30-something, married with two pre-school children in the house the message of reduce, reuse, recycle comes across loud and clear - and not just via Bob the Builder! (Vision Feb, March).

We recycle as much as we can as the refuse collectors will testify. However, I believe something needs to be done to get the older generation to "buy in". They feel they may not be around, so it is not as important for them.

I also think that the leaflets on recycling for the bin boxes should be clearer on what plastics can be recycled. For example, what about the plastic trays that contain vegetables? What about washed-out margarine tubs?

The main thing that the council could do for everyone and not just for Lancashire but country-wide is to challenge the supermarkets on their packaging. I love to buy fresh fruit and vegetables but unless you buy large quantities of salad or certain fruits they all come in plastic trays which take up lots of room in the black bin as I am unsure as to whether they can be recycled.

Surely if the supermarkets changed a lot of their packing and used old-fashioned products such as potatoes in the paper sacks that can be recycled or biodegraded, string bags for oranges or cardboard trays rather than



● **ACTION** now to counter climate change: research shows that North West summer rain has decreased by 20 per cent in the last century. Snow is forecast to decrease by up to 30 per cent by 2020.

plastic boxes, a lot of rubbish would not be produced.

I also feel that if more people went back to using a milkman and his reusable glass bottles then a huge amount of waste material in the form of non-recyclable milk cartons would be prevented.

SARAH LAWRENSEN

Fulwood

VISION highlights the challenges facing us as a result of climate change. You invited comments. I have two suggestions:

1. One initiative Lancashire could take is to reduce the number of street lights in the county. Having lived in other counties, and being a regular traveller around the country, I can honestly say that Lancashire appears to have more miles of lit rural roads than any other county.

There are miles of street lighting on rural stretches of the A59, A56 A6, M6 in Lancashire and plenty more rural routes besides. These are roads with long stretches where there are few houses, even fewer pedestrians, and where road safety and security are not issues requiring lighting. By all means continue to provide lighting at accident blackspots (but there are probably alternatives at these too).

This would reduce electricity consumption significantly, not to mention the energy associated with the manufacture, installation and maintenance of all these unnecessary lighting columns.

2. I confess to not knowing the detail, but it seems that there is little integration of the times of transport in some areas.

More joined-up thinking might save both costs and energy.

RICHARD COOK

IAPPLAUD the Lancashire County Council initiative to reduce the county's carbon footprint, but wonder if it may be "too little, too late" to reverse the ravages of climate change.

In the light of the UK Stern Report, which predicts 10 years to save the planet from irreversible damage and of the UN IPCC Consensus Report of 2,500 scientists, we need to have far more radical policies.

Of course, we need to do all the things listed in the Vision article but I can think of at least three more drastic and urgent actions which would improve the chances of averting disaster.

We should:

● Commit to becoming carbon neutral within 5-10 years.

● Establish a zero-waste strategy and action plan to be fully implemented within 5-10 years.

● Change the Local Transport Plan to cut

out any new road schemes and divert monies to more sustainable modes of public transport, such as integrated rail and bus schemes.

The truth is that we already have the technologies to go green. What we need is the political and moral will to invest in a secure future now.

By prompt action we will also reap the benefits economically, socially and environmentally with a better quality of life for us and our children.

DAVID PENNEY

Colne

IT is good to see the county council doing its bit about climate change in the Feb 2007 issue of Vision.

I hope people with a moment to spare will take a look at my humble website and my effort : www.thinktransport.org

Turn the sound up when you open the page!

LEONARD WELLS

Haslingden

Message in a bottle

DRINKING and young people is an extremely complex subject (Vision, March) but briefly, I think there should be a combination of measures which make alcohol less freely available and change social opinion about alcohol.

In the first category I would support moves to make alcohol more expensive by banning special offers/promotions in bars.

I would also support shorter licensing hours for pubs and restaurants. The excuse about tourists not knowing when and where they can buy a drink when on holiday is not a reason to have 24-hour drinking.

Neither is the fact that, with fixed licensing times, everyone is chucked out of the pub at the same time and so fights start. Fights start because people are drunk, not because the pubs close at the same time.

The British drinking culture and habits are not like those of other countries. If alcohol is more widely available, more people will get heavily drunk, more often.

There should be a maximum alcohol content on draught and bottled lagers/ciders etc of 3.5 per cent.

There should be a maximum alcohol content on wine of 12 per cent and fortified wine of 15 per cent.

There should be a maximum alcohol content of spirits of 35 per cent.

The drinking age should be raised to 21. Alcohol should be treated in the same way as cigarettes have been over the past 10 years. Alcohol advertising should be banned. There should be more social events and

activities for young people which are alcohol-free, to generate the feeling that it is possible to have a great night out without excessive drinking.

TV programmes/films should show fewer shots of people drinking.

Use the analogy of secondary smoking to publicise all the social problems caused when people drink heavily (for example, physical abuse, breakdown of partnerships/families, vandalism, unwanted teenage pregnancies, rape etc) and give it a name so it can be categorised, and tackled bit by bit.

Create a culture where it is socially unacceptable to go "on a bender" just like there has been a sea-change in the opinion on drink-driving.

I believe it is one which can be tackled successfully with a concerted campaign from government and local authorities.

PETER BULLIVANT

THE best remedy, in my opinion, is to levy a tax on admission to the nightclubs in which binge-drinking happens.

This tax would:

a. take a little money out of these kids' pockets - thus, less for alcohol.

b. provide money for the "clean-up" operation when they spill out of the club ie police, ambulance, street-cleaning.

c. hit the kids' pockets so that they may realise first-hand the damage being done.

d. take away a little long-term stress on their livers and thus less stress on the health service in the long term.

I really do think that the only way to make young people aware of what they are doing is to directly hit them with a tax that might also force the nightclub owners to act more responsibly.

PAULA JAPP

THERE are many steps to reducing the problems associated with under-age drinking and the violence and anti-social behaviour that goes with it (Vision, March).

Unfortunately most of the responsibility is with the parents and therefore beyond the reach of direct action by council or government. Apart from education and publicity for the affects of drunkenness there are limits.

However there are some practical measures that can be put into place that would restrict the problem:

1. No sale of any alcohol to a person who appears less than 21 without photo ID. Make this mandatory to all liquor sale licences

2. Ban consumption in public places. Make it a criminal offence to hold open bottles, glasses, etc. in a public place. This gives the police power to arrest and detain anyone whatever age with alcohol in the street. It also may reduce the number of broken beer bottles that litter the street and play areas that youths use for illegal drinking.

MARTIN LEWIS

Use Shanks's pony

MANY people lament the traffic generated by school travel (School Shows Safer Way, Vision, March).

The School Travel Plans are a huge step in the right direction.

Who among us has never noticed how quiet the roads become at holiday times?

The reason is simple - the cars are not clogged up by parents driving their children a few hundred yards to school. Other road users benefit - and the environment benefits by having fewer traffic jams.

The way ahead is clear. Let's keep school-related traffic to a minimum. And that means one thing - get the children walking again!

It is surely a virtuous circle. The child also benefits as they make new friends on the school walk and they keep fit - something we are told is a national priority.

M LOPEZ

Preston

Louts' grave shame

MY beloved husband, Harry, died in 1961 and is buried in the cemetery on Garstang Road.

I visit his grave every two weeks, but recently found someone had tried to prise the brass container - in which I used to place flowers - away from the memorial stone.

Shame on those who have done this. If I had seen them I would have been unable to contain my anger.

MRS F BROWN

Poulton-Le-Fylde

Museum Bond seeks licence to thrill

SOME of Lancashire's most interesting corners are to be explored in a bid to prepare the county's museums for the future.

And that could mean more time in the limelight for displays such as ... a 1950s Daimler Dingo armoured car and an example of the Bond fibreglass mini-car produced in Preston.

Historically minded members of the public have gifted such artefacts to the county council museum service but lack of display space means many spend more time in safe storage than on display.

"People never wanted us just to store it. They wanted us to use it to help people understand their past", said County Councillor Chris Cheetham.

"We now have an Aladdin's cave of objects. Better rotation of exhibits will let people see them as intended. "We actually have a range of interesting things we know they would enjoy but we struggle to find places to display everything we hold."

Some of the artefacts not currently displayed are sent to schools in loan boxes.

Other aspects of the review – still in its very early stages – are to include detailed investigation of the possibility of improving catering and sales of mementoes and also looking at how parts of the service could be organised to attract charitable status and the benefits that go with that.

Councillor Cheetham, cabinet member for Adult and Community Services, added: "Some of our artefacts are routine and some are rare and interesting.

"We are looking at the entire provision of museum services across the county, and that includes working with district councils and voluntary groups."

● Discussions have already taken place between Lancashire County Council and Ribbles Valley District Council about upgrading the existing partnership that runs Clitheroe castle museum. The county's museum expertise has gone into developing the proposed refurbishment which is being considered by the Heritage Lottery fund.



IAN Gibson in museum Bond car.

Never say never again, says Ian

IAN Gibson, head of collections for Lancashire museums, is pictured in a Bond car that is currently kept in storage.

lan writes:

The Bond was built in Preston at the former Sharp's Commercials premises in Ribblesdale and designed by aircraft engineer the late Lawrence Bond. Our Mk A (built in 1950) was one of the first of a line of Bond minicars which ran up to the Mk G.

After the Mk G they made a rather short-lived three-wheeler with a Commer Cob (same as a Hillman Imp) rear-mounted engine/gearbox/axle, and finally (after being taken over by Reliant of Tamworth) they made the Bond Bug.

Our Mk A is made almost entirely of aluminium riveted together as in aircraft practice. It is powered by a 197cc Villiers engine and has three forward gears (no reverse). There are

no doors, you just climb in!

Ours is the de-luxe model and therefore has a single electric windscreen wiper - the standard model was just provided with a single wiper arm you could swing too and fro by hand!

We have a conservation problem with the steering wheel which has a plastic rim now nearly 60 years old (like the car) and the plastic is deteriorating. It is undergoing tests in conservation.

50,000 daffs put Lytham in Bloom

NATURE-loving children, the green fingers of volunteers – and a little help from Lancashire County Council – are putting a smile on the face of one of the North West's most picturesque resorts.

For two years running Lytham has won North West in Bloom Best Coastal Resort category and this summer will be judged in the nation's Britain in Bloom final.

So a spring-clean and spruce-up starts now:

● with the town's schoolchildren entering a contest to design a wildlife garden for outside Lytham library,

● with a colourful sea of 50,000 daffodils on the famed "seafront" Lytham Green and

● with a garden, footpath and cenotaph facelift at Cenotaph Gardens.

Jim Leak, Lytham in Bloom chair-

man, said: "Winning the North West title was a source of great pride, and now we have to improve even on that for this summer's nationwide final.

"The whole town is benefiting from it while the area in front of the windmill looks particularly appealing. Volunteers have done a great job with support from across the community and also from Fylde Council and the county council's Green Partnership Awards."

Hundreds of children in the town's schools are being asked to design a wildlife garden for the library.

The winner will have the pride of winning – and also of seeing the garden actually built before Britain in Bloom judges visit this summer.

● ENGLISH Nature's Rebecca Cleaver will give a free talk to members of the public on "Ponds, Their Wildlife, and Why They are Important" at the library at 2pm on 23 May.



● LANDMARK: Jim Leak, left, and Tony Taylor in front of Lytham's famous windmill.

Be a Lytham In Bloom volunteer. Contact Jim on 01253 796826.

Expand your life as a volunteer

LANCASHIRE County Council's Volunteer Service has marked the achievements of 16 of the county's finest volunteers at a special celebration event.

The volunteers were presented with certificates of achievement for successfully completing the Partners in Volunteering course. The awards were presented at Lancashire College in Chorley.

The three-month course, run in

conjunction with Lancashire College, is aimed at current registered volunteers to enhance their skills to enable them to put their learning into practice with the people they support.

For more information about volunteering contact the Lancashire Volunteer Service helpline on 01257 248118 or visit www.openingdoors.lancashire.gov.uk

NEWS IN BRIEF

Watch the birds with Bittern bus

PEOPLE looking to shed a few pounds are urged to board the Bittern Bus - a bargain at just £3 for an all-day pass.

The service is a great way to ride around some of Lancashire's finest countryside each Sunday. Travellers also get the chance to see some of the county's birdlife as part of their trip.

The bus travels through Camforth and into the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) around Arncliffe and Silverdale and via the RSPB at Leighton Moss nature reserve. It leaves Lancaster University at 9.55am and Lancaster Bus Station at 10.10am.

The single fare is just £1.50 for an adult or £3.00 for an all day Bittern pass, allowing you to get on and off the bus anywhere on the route with just the one ticket.

As a special bonus, Bittern Bus ticket holders can also obtain free access to the RSPB Leighton Moss reserve, worth £4.50, on presentation of a valid bus ticket.

A free Bittern Bus guided walk also takes place on the first Sunday of every month at 11am.

The return bus from Arncliffe to Lancaster leaves at 3.45pm and there are additional journeys from Camforth to Arncliffe at 12.35pm and 2.35pm with returns from Arncliffe at 11.45am, 1.45pm and 3.45pm.

For further information, pick up a copy of timetable leaflet 150 from your local tourist information centre or from the Camforth Connect office at Camforth Railway Station.

Information about all bus services in Lancashire is available from Traveline by calling 0870 608 2 608 or by visiting www.transportforlancashire.com

Advice on child help

A NEW website providing useful information and a means for the public to contact relevant agencies if they are concerned about the welfare of a child has been launched.

Launched by the multi-agency Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), the site also provides advice and contact information for children and young people if they, or somebody they know, feel unsafe or is being ill-treated.

The website has been launched alongside the publication of new LSCB Safeguarding Procedures that ensure a consistent approach to child welfare.

The website can be found at www.lancashire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildrenboard

NEWS IN BRIEF

Chance to work

TWO "jobs roadshows" are planned to tell people about job vacancies in the public sector.

The roadshows are planned to positively expand the diversity of the workforce within the county council and the other involved public sector employers.

The first roadshow was held in January in Accrington when representatives of Lancashire County Council, the Police, Hyndburn Council and a variety of other bodies were present.

Similar roadshows will be held on Tuesday 24 April at Pendle Pakistan Welfare Association, Brierfield, and on Tuesday 22 May at the Old Fire Station, Rawtenstall.

In addition to job vacancies, people can learn of training and volunteering opportunities. Visitors attending the roadshows will have an opportunity to enter a prize draw to win a gift voucher.

Equality treat

LANCASHIRE County Council has adopted a new strategy to guarantee that everyone will be treated equally.

"Making a Difference" will ensure that everyone, regardless of their circumstances, is treated the same when it comes to county council services.

The policy also seeks to ensure that people are treated the same when it comes to applying for county council jobs.

On track

APPROVAL has been given to convert sections of the footways on Caton Road and Kingsway, Lancaster, to cycle tracks.

Social work charter launched to improve children's services

By Andrew Lynn

CHILDREN and families who have regular contact with social workers can expect higher standards of care and greater communication as set out by a new Social Work Customer Charter.

The Social Work Charter, entitled "What you can expect from us", has been developed by social workers from Lancashire County Council's children's social care services in efforts to improve services for children.

The aim is to improve internal procedures so that children, young people and families receiving or in need of social services are better informed about their cases, have access to information about their rights, fully understand the range of support that is available to them, and are properly listened to.

The commitment follows consultation with staff and children and young people in care through the council's Young People's Panel.

The Social Work Customer Charter sets out the following standards for social workers to adhere to:

- Social workers will return calls as a priority and respond to messages when they say they will.

- Social workers will provide their contact details including their work

mobile number and email for customers to keep in touch.

- Social workers will provide details about the county council's complaint procedures if customers are not happy with services or do not receive the response they are expecting.

- Social workers will notify customers if they are to be allocated with a new social worker and, where possible, joint visits will take place during the transition period.

- Social workers will ensure customers have access to information about their cases, services and their rights.

- Social workers will give customers the opportunity to ask questions and will always listen to what they have to say.

- Social workers will always try to talk with children and young people directly first before talking to parents or carers.

The charter will be cascaded to all social workers and included as part of the council's staff induction packs and staff training programmes.



● **MARCUS Johnstone:** we have listened to the young people in care.

The county council supports children and young people looked-after by the authority, children who have been, or are at risk of being harmed, children with disabilities, and families who need additional support from children's social care services.

The county council employs 246 qualified social workers within its Directorate for Children and Young People.

Commenting on the charter Sue Fadipe, head of Children's Social Care Services, said:

"Our staff do a fantastic job, often under pressure and in difficult circumstances. But we ultimately want to improve our services and the relationship between social workers and those who receive our services."

"The aim of this charter is to place children and young people at the centre of our services. It's very much about changing the way we work, improving how we communicate and how we share information with children, young people and families who need our support. All our staff are very serious about this."

County Councillor Marcus Johnstone, cabinet member for Children and Young People, added:

"Like any large business or public organisation we must continue to develop ways to engage with our customers and focus on fully meeting their needs. We have listened to the young

people in care and they have told us what they want from our staff. This charter is a commitment to improve services."

In December 2006, the annual performance ratings for the County Council's Children's Services, carried out by Ofsted and the Commission for Social Care Inspection, concluded that services for children and young people were generally "good" with some "excellent" work being done.

Services for vulnerable children and young people in care were praised, with inspectors recognising that the council has an effective network of support for young carers and satisfactory advocacy arrangements.

The council's previous good performance in the area of child protection was found to have been maintained and improved with social workers offering a quick and effective assessment and service.

The report noted that vulnerable children were receiving effective support into continuing education and employment. More vulnerable children are being placed with foster carers through a new fostering-focus scheme, which helps to ensure fewer children are cared for in residential homes.

According to the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS), the public's attitude towards social workers rapidly improves if it has first-hand contact with them.

Fairtrade county - battle begins

● **FAIRTRADE** goodies on display at coffee morning: from left County Councillor Vali Patel, caterer Penny Eastham and County Councillor Tim Ormrod.



A BUMPER Fairtrade fortnight has launched an official bid to make Lancashire the largest Fairtrade area in the country.

From one end of the county to the other, chocolate, coffee, tea, clothes, cakes, wine and even jewellery were sold in the annual fortnight of activities.

The Fairtrade concept involves people paying "fair" prices to help producers and their families help themselves to a brighter future.

Activities included fashion shows, Fairtrade stalls, supermarket information stands, chocolate fountains, coffee mornings, music concerts and theatre productions. An exchange of goods at Fulwood Methodist Church invited people to bring non-Fairtrade items and replace them with Fairtrade ones.

County Councillor Tim Ormrod, Lancashire County Council's

Fairtrade champion, said: "Fairtrade has taken off across the county – a great start to the launch of the Lancashire Fairtrade Network."

"The network aims to make Lancashire the largest fair-trade county in Britain. First we have to show that fair-trade goods are available across the county – in shops and workplaces."

Garstang is already a Fairtrade town and Burnley is well down the road of applying.

Lancashire's campaign involves Lancashire County Council – but only as one of dozens of groups across the county.

It is hoped that historic Lancashire, including Manchester, Merseyside, Blackburn and Blackpool will be classed as a "Fairtrade Lancashire" – a considerably wider area than that covered by present county council borders.

Celebration of women in power

PAST and present women councillors are being invited to a County Hall celebration to mark a century of women in local government.

It was only in 1907 that the law was changed to allow women to seek public office – although it was 1922 before the first woman was elected to Lancashire County Council.

The authority has since made up for its slow start – its leader and deputy leader are now women and, in the 1990s, the leaders of all three main parties were women.

It is also planned to tour the county with an exhibition about the history of women in local government in Lancashire.

The first woman elected to the county council was Mrs Katherine Orme who represented Clitheroe. She was followed soon after by Miss Caroline Whitehead and Lady Audrey Worsley-Taylor.

Even so, the authority only had four elected women members by 1928.

The experiences of women county councillors over the years will also be recorded for the sound archives – often the basis of much writing of history in the future.

- Lancashire County Council was established in 1889 – not all working men could vote then.
- The cost of elections used to be prohibitive for many people and only 40 county divisions (out of 105) were contested in the first elections.
- In 1892, only 14 seats were contested! Most county councillors were either manufacturers or country gentry.
- Its initial responsibilities were restricted to supervision of main roads and police.
- The Lancashire County Council area used to extend into areas now regarded as Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire – Rochdale, Warrington, Wigan and Bootle.

A 4-star council

Awarded top marks by the Audit Commission



Environment

Temporary planning officer

Ref: ENV 139

£23,175 to £26,928 a year. Appointment within the scale will be appropriate to qualifications and experience.

37 hours a week at Strategic Planning and Transport Section, Winkley Square Complex, Cross Street, Preston. This is a full-time, temporary post to cover for maternity leave to start from April 2007 and is anticipated to last 6 months with the possibility of a further 6 month extension. Lancashire is an 'Excellent Council' according to the Audit Commission and we'd like you to help us keep it that way. Would you enjoy the challenge of delivering our developing environmental policy agenda? We are looking for a team player, with the confidence, initiative and enthusiasm, and communication skills, to contribute positively to the demanding work of the directorate.

Your role will primarily relate to the collation and analysis of environmental data sets to assist with our developing environmental policy and 'climate change' agenda. Your general IT, database, and GIS skills will play a vital role in progressing this work together with a sound knowledge of environmental statistics.

Interview dates: 23 and 24 April, 2007.

Informal discussion: Roger Robinson on 01772 534706.

Apply online at: www.lancashire.gov.uk/vacancies or email: personnelandtraining@env.lancsc.gov.uk. Tel: 01772 533570, 24hr answerphone.

Closing date: 13 April 2007.

Lancashire County Council is an equal opportunities employer welcoming applications from all sections of the community. Applications from ethnic minorities are welcome. You must be committed to equality and diversity in the workplace. Lancashire County Council are currently undergoing an equal pay review and the grades of some posts advertised may be subject to review in future months.

A full job description of all vacancies is available on our website www.lancashire.gov.uk/vacancies

My LANCASHIRE my PLANET



● The state-of-the-art facility planned for Leyland which will also house an environmental education centre. Three hundred schools will visit the site each year to learn more about high-tech waste recycling.

£2 billion deal will keep your waste out of damaging landfill

A DEAL has been struck which will see the red rose county become home to some of the nation's greenest technology for dealing with household waste.

The £2bn deal with Global Renewables Ltd will see world-leading technology used to treat Lancashire's household waste.

Steve Browne, Lancashire's director of waste and natural resources, said: "This method compares very favourably with any other option. Landfill costs are increasing as availability becomes scarce so we need to take the right steps now."

The project will result in two cutting-edge waste management facilities at Leyland and Thornton to handle some 600,000 tonnes per annum of household waste.

Lancashire is already recycling more than any other county council in the North of England thanks to the investment in kerbside collections, household waste recycling centres and the efforts of householders.

These new facilities will back up that system and drastically reduce the amount of refuse going to landfill sites, avoid the need for incineration, increase recycling rates and have a direct impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Waste will be sorted using an innovative mechanical and biological treatment (MBT) process that recovers recyclable materials such as paper, metal, glass and plastic.

It then transforms the organic portions of the waste into renewable energy and a high quality compost product, suitable for woodland or energy crop

planting, together with land reclamation and remediation.

Steve continued: "This is one of the most carbon-friendly solutions currently available to deal with household waste."

Our residents have told us that incineration and mass landfilling should no longer be options for Lancashire.

"We are also delighted that Blackpool Borough Council has played a key part in the project as its commitment to a greener future will go a long way to helping to achieve reduction and recycling targets."

The two Waste Technology Parks constructed through this new contract will form the centrepiece of a wider network that will cover the entire county.

● Below: A closer look at the education centre which will be a focus for children across Lancashire.



Top of the green charts

● **ONE of Lancashire's best used "green" services has been awarded a top accolade.**

Lancashire County Council's household waste recycling centres have been awarded the Charter Mark – the national standard for customer service excellence.

The centres managed to recycle more than 51,000 tonnes of waste and create more than 15,000 tonnes of compost last year. This is all thanks to the hard work of our staff and the Charter Mark is a great way to recognise their contribution to reducing Lancashire's waste mountain.

Each HWRC has facilities to deal with 20 different types of waste and help deal with 25 per cent of the waste thrown away in the county each year.

The success of the sites, which recycle or re-use more than 70 per cent of all materials taken there, is down to the county council's commitment to recycling and reuse and the site staff's hard work.

● **A NATIONAL poll has ranked Lancashire top of the heap for recycling.**

The poll investigated the service delivered at local household waste recycling 'tips' and showed an impressive 93 per cent satisfaction rate.

This places the county in front of all the 149 other councils with these type of facilities.

Household waste recycling centres last year recycled an average of 58 per cent of the waste taken to them, with the best site reaching 73 per cent.

Talks plan to launch school academy

PROPOSALS to develop an Expression of Interest to establish an Academy to serve the Hyndburn area have been approved by the county council's Cabinet member for Schools.

Academies are funded directly by Whitehall and form a key element of plans to transform educational opportunities for young people.

The Hyndburn Academy, which would be the first of its kind in Lancashire, would be located on the site of Moorhead Sports College and provide for pupils aged from 11 to 18.

Councillor Alan Whittaker, Lancashire County Council's Cabinet member for Schools, said: "We will be working with all schools and partners in the area to develop this vision for the future."

"We want to ensure that all pupils benefit, and propose that the post-16 provision at the Academy should be a joint venture between schools in Hyndburn."

"The county council will develop the proposals in discussion with local headteachers and school governing bodies as well as Whitehall and potential sponsors."

Rosebud smells sweet

A SCHEME to help local businesses get off the ground has won another industry accolade.

For the second year running, Rosebud - financed by Lancashire County Council's economic development department, Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL), has been named Fund of the Year at the prestigious Insider magazine Lancashire Dealmakers' Awards.

More than 400 businesses have benefited, with over £25m being invested in Lancashire-based companies from small start-ups to large operations.

Loans and equity funding are available for sums from £5,000 to £500,000 upwards for businesses either already based in Lancashire or those relocating to the county. For more information contact LCDL on 01772 551888 or visit www.lcdl.co.uk

What does Lancashire mean to you?



(Above) ↑ Curator John McGoldrick gets comfortable in the 1950s room.



(Right) → Jimi Hendrix once performed in Blackpool. His picture is one of many taken by Harry Goodwin and featured in the museum, along with pictures of John and Yoko, Marc Bolan and other.



So much to see

Exhibitions planned for later this year include Living with the Romans, running from 14 July to 22 December, which throws light on the often-neglected subject of what life was like for ordinary people living in Britain under the Romans.

There will be artefacts, interactive films, workshops and role plays, and it is hoped that part of a roundhouse – the dome-shaped wicker structure that Lancashire folk lived in during Roman times – can be built in the museum's entrance hall.

You can find the Museum of Lancashire on Stanley Street just outside Preston's city centre, tel: 01772 534075.

A PLACE, a person, a song, an object? Or perhaps a taste of traditional

Lancashire food, a folk event that's etched into your memory, or a view of mill chimneys?

When John McGoldrick from the Museum of Lancashire asked the question on local radio, the calls came in thick and fast. One person rang to say that for them, Lancashire was represented by a pair of child's clogs they had found inside a wall in their house in Lancaster.

"People used to bury objects in their homes as a kind of charm," John said. "Sometimes they would put a broken teapot beneath the hearth to ensure they'd always be warm and nourished, or wall up a dead cat as a protection against witchcraft."

Now staff at the museum are building up an exhibition as more and more people tell them what Lancashire evokes for them. Objects already on display include a commemorative plate from Rawtenstall Cop's fiftieth anniversary, a Ken Dodd tickling stick, a moustache cup, and a hefty pair of clogs; evocative items from living memory, and beyond.

As soon as you step into the Museum of Lancashire, you can feel history surrounding you. Built cheek by jowl with Preston prison, the museum was the Preston Sessions courthouse until 1900, and display cases now stand where nineteenth-century miscreants cringed in the dock as they awaited sentence.

If found guilty, they were literally sent down – the stairs remain – to the cells below, where a short journey to the prison house next door awaited them.

These days, visitors to the building find a much warmer welcome. The museum, just off Stanley Street on the edge of the town centre, has easy parking, friendly staff, a small café and a host of exhibitions to interest adults and children alike.



A lucky escape for Leyland in 1940... the bomb that did not explode.

The exhibitions at the museum vary widely, not just in subject matter but in period. Coins, buttons and jewellery from the Roman age and before can be seen in the Early History room, while mums and dads of a certain age will be fascinated by the work of Harry Goodwin, official 'stills' photographer for Top of the Pops from 1964 to 1973, who snapped musical celebrities ranging from Lulu and Louis Armstrong to Michael Jackson, Freddie Mercury and Marc Bolan.

John is particularly proud of the WWII area, where a massive 500kg bomb that fell on Leyland Motors in October 1940 presides over an authentic street scene including an Anderson shelter, a wartime motorbike and a 1940s kitchen.

"There is definitely something here for everyone and we're keen to encourage families and groups to come along and see what we have and talk to our staff," said John. "We're only a five-minute walk from Preston city centre and there is car parking here as well. We have a café so people can relax with a cup of tea during their visit and we have regular events so there is always something new."

Exhibitions planned for later this year include Living with the Romans, running from 14 July to 22 December, which throws light on the often-neglected subject of what life was like for ordinary people living in Britain under the Romans from AD40 to AD440.

There will be artefacts, interactive films, workshops and role plays, and it is hoped that part of a roundhouse – the dome-shaped wicker structure that Lancashire folk lived in during Roman times – can be built in the museum's entrance hall.

You can find the Museum of Lancashire on Stanley Street just outside Preston's city centre, tel: 01772 534075 or visit the Lancashire Museums website www.lancsmuseums.gov.uk

Take a magical museum trip

CHILDREN are going on museum trips without even leaving their desks.

The video conferences link classrooms and three of Lancashire's museums so that lessons can be taught "live" by museum experts using real museum objects.

Growing interest nationwide could also prove a moneyspinner as the live classes could be sold to schools elsewhere in the country.

Helmshore Textile Museum, Lancaster's Judges' Lodgings and Preston's new conservation studios each have high-definition cameras linked to the web – meaning pictures and sounds are wired direct to large screens in classrooms.

David Chadwick, museums' head of learning, said: "The advantage is that the 'lessons' are interactive.

"Pupils can see real objects – and, unlike a TV programme, they can respond and ask questions there and then of the presenter.

"The video conferences also allow teachers and pupils to further

develop the lesson through linked websites. The conferences also allow the showing of video clips of historical moments and re-enactments."

The conferences, part-funded by museum and school bosses in Lancashire and Cumbria, are meant to supplement and not replace school visits to museums.

They open up a new world of school trips – without pupils and teachers having to clamber aboard fleets of coaches.

Conferencing lessons developed so far include Victorian working life, Britain since 1948, life in Tudor Lancashire, Victorian wash day, and the home front in World War Two.

David adds: "This brings history to life – and that gets people asking questions about the present and the future.

"This has national and international implications because some of the museum material we have is unique."

Life in Lancashire

So much
to do



NATURE'S textures and patterns are the subject for a series of April workshops at Lancaster City Museum. The workshops – on 5, 7, 12 and

14 April – will create a textile timeline to display alongside the current Earth: Grand Designs exhibition. Details on 01524 64637.



Used well, banks can be a blessing – but beware their charges, writes trading standards officer Julian Edwards.

WE take for granted that banks will do the right thing and comply with the law.

This is generally the case but sometimes they will only do things if you push them and they are frequently willing to stretch a point if it can work to their advantage.

With the increased use of credit and debit charges there is a need to

Take our advice and save £££s in bank charges

be vigilant over the way in which your accounts are administered.

Used properly modern banking can make managing your household finances much simpler. However, there are pitfalls and worries especially where you get into debt or exceed credit limits

Some basics:

When using a credit card for a transaction over £100 the credit card provider has equal liability if you have problems with the goods or services. It does not matter if the transaction is abroad.

If a company goes bust and you have paid by credit card then you can claim the whole amount back from the card company. The claim is

not limited to amounts you use on the credit card, so it is good practice and good insurance to pay partially by credit card for any transaction.

With debit cards, with the proviso that you need to act quickly, you may have a right to redress using what is called "charge back". This is more limited than the rights with credit cards, and does not apply to all banks debit cards, but it can have the same effect.

With charge back your claim is limited to the amount you have paid using the card.

If your account is used fraudulently you are not normally liable for the losses unless you are grossly negligent. With credit cards your

liability is limited to £50.

When you have a credit card or bank account you enter into a contract with the bank with agreed terms and conditions. In reality they are imposed on you.

In law these terms have to be fair. Accordingly you have every right to challenge charges which you feel have been unfairly levied.

■ With credit cards it has been agreed that charges in excess of £12 are in most cases unfair.

■ No ruling has been made with bank charges but it is expected that a similar amount will be agreed.

If you have been charged more than £12 for a default then you should ask for monies to be refunded.

Legally you can ask for charges that have been unfairly levied going back six years.

Only if the bank can show that the charge is proportionate to the costs they have incurred as a result of your default will they be able to sustain it. With automatically generated charges this is unlikely.

Savings

Banks have no obligation to tell you if there is a better deal available. Banks are very happy for you to have money in dormant low interest accounts even though if you ask they will equally happily transfer it to higher rated products.

Check you are getting the best rate as often as possible.

Community 'voice' helps hidden carers

FACT FILE

- The total number of carers in the UK is estimated at 5.8m.
- According to Carers UK, it is estimated that carers annually save the Exchequer

over £57bn – equal to the cost of the NHS.

- Over 1m carers care for over 50 hours per week.
- One adult in eight in the UK is a carer and one in six households contains a carer.
- Around three in five people will be a carer at some

point in their lives.

- Fourteen per cent (3m) of the female population are carers, compared with 11 per cent (2.4m) of the male population who are carers.
- One in four carers have been looking after someone for at least 10 years.

BECOMING a carer is not a role most people willingly choose. It's often more of a duty or vocation bestowed upon them due to their family's circumstances.

In fact, anyone can find themselves being a carer during their lifetime.

"Carers come from all walks of life, from all parts of the community and from different cultural backgrounds", says Sarah McTigue, carers' strategy officer at Lancashire County Council.

It is estimated that in the UK there are approximately 5.8m people who care for a relative, partner, friend or disabled child in an unpaid capacity. One in eight people spend a significant proportion of their lives looking after someone who is unable to cope on their own, with one in six households containing a carer.

Almost one million people spend over 50 hours each week caring for someone.

In Lancashire it is believed there are around 125,000 carers. This represents more than one in 10 of the population.

Often the carer is unable to continue working as they struggle to work full-time in addition to their caring role.

"Most carers do not have time for themselves and put their own interests second to their caring role", explains Sarah.

"This can mean carers can become socially excluded and isolated in their own homes. Many lose out on their personal hobbies, leisure or further education."

Friends and other members of the family can find it difficult to understand how important and time-consuming caring is. When asked what carers do, some people find it very difficult or are embarrassed to acknowledge they are carers due to the negative reaction this can bring, particularly if they do not work and depend on state benefits.

"Many people do not see themselves as a carer or acknowledge their caring role. This can mean many people don't come forward for any help, advice or support", says Sarah.

"Many carers are not aware enough of what support is available and which benefits they are entitled to. Some carers are

(Right) → **ACHIEVE:** training keeps Mohammed learning even though he must spend many hours caring.

For more information about support for carers in Lancashire visit www.lancashire.gov.uk/carers or contact your local social services office

busy looking after their friends or relatives and don't have time to ask for help or don't want to make a fuss."

This can be particularly true for families and carers from Asian and ethnic minority communities who are often reluctant to seek help.

In Lancashire, the county council works with a variety of local organisations and community groups to support carers. The staff in each project act as an essential link for carers with social care services and other statutory and voluntary services.

In addition, the county council supports a number of local voluntary groups such as the Pukar Disability Resource Centre in Preston. The centre acts as a drop-in service and provides a range of bi-lingual support for carers and people with disabilities.

Nisha Patel, Pukar Centre manager, says: "Black and Asian carers are often faced with multiple exclusions and fear can be an obstacle, with many reluctant to seek help due to their sense of family duty."

"For many families, disability is a taboo subject and so many can be embarrassed or don't want the community to know about their problems."

The centre runs a variety of courses and activities for around 50 carers – 84 per cent of whom are from ethnic minorities. Courses include languages, cooking, first aid, IT and computer skills that are run in partnership with Myerscough College and Lancashire College.

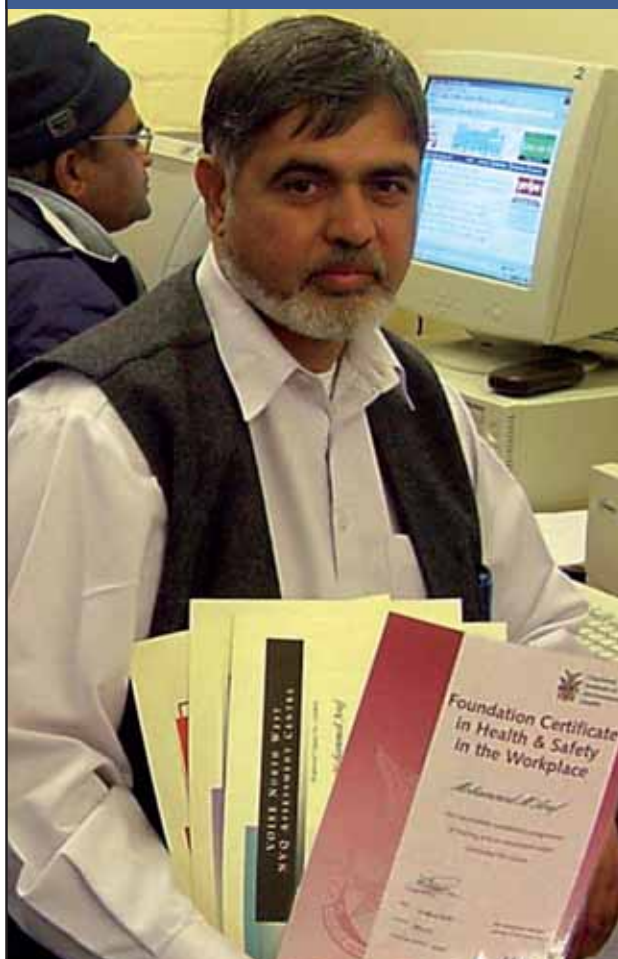
Also included are leisure and social activities, life skills development courses and training provided in key areas to suit the development of each individual.

"Pukar means 'voice' in Gujarati", said Nisha.

"Our aim is to empower carers by providing them with information and liaise with other statutory services. We also encourage carers and run courses to develop their confidence and skills to help them do things for themselves and get back into work if they want."

"Other carers may just want a break from their caring role and somewhere safe and friendly where they can meet and befriend other carers."

MOHAMMED FINDS LEARNING HELPS HIM WITH CARING AT HOME



MOHAMMED Araf cares for a disabled member of his family and following an assessment now attends the Pukar Centre weekly.

As English is Mr Araf's second language, he benefits from help with forms, letters and other information about support available for his family through social services.

Mr Araf has taken advantage of many courses at Pukar in order to help him better understand his role as a carer.

He has also benefited from a variety of training including health and safety, basic

first aid, a vulnerable adult protection course and a NVQ level 2 adult learner support course. He is currently enrolled on a computer class in order to improve his IT skills.

Mr Araf says: "Our family is in a much better position since we have approached Pukar for any problems or barriers that we had been faced with."

"I am sure that Pukar is making a considerable difference to many people's lives and will continue to do so. It is a service that is very much in need."

LOOK LIVELY

Voice of
Vision



Bernard Kershaw
Principal emergency
planning officer

MOST everyday emergencies in Lancashire are dealt with by the police, fire or ambulance services who will respond in minutes following a 999 call.

But bigger incidents, such as the recent Cumbrian Rail crash and the cockle-picking tragedy in Morecambe Bay make much greater demands.

Lancashire County Council's Emergency Planning team is responsible for developing detailed plans which set out how the "blue light" services, local authorities, and voluntary agencies work together in the event of a major incident.

We ensure that people can return to their normal lives quickly.

What does your job involve?

My job is to ensure that the county council is well prepared to care for people who may be affected by a large emergency.

It could be that people have been evacuated from their homes and need accommodation at a rest centre or we are getting information to people who are concerned about their loved ones or making sure help is there for people who have been bereaved.

To be well prepared we need to plan and I lead a team of people who work with the emergency services, voluntary agencies and government departments such as the environment agency.

What sort of incidents do you prepare for? We have plans for floods, chemical spills or any incident involving a large number of casualties – such as the cockle disaster at Morecambe Bay.

We recently carried out a training exercise to practice for a leak of nuclear material. As well as saving life we protect the environment to reduce the long-term impact of incidents. We have also been involved in an exercise on pandemic flu.

The exercises take months of planning to make them realistic.

What do you like most about the job?

I enjoy variety. We work with different organisations and people on a wide range of subjects.

I also find it a great challenge in that you never know when an incident is going to happen.

The job satisfaction comes from the professionalism of emergency planning. I know that staff are trained to deal with an incident and I have seen the result of that in the professional way they handle a real emergency.

What is a typical day?

We spend a considerable amount of time working with other agencies, often from outside the county.

For example, one of my officers is at a meeting with four other agencies this morning to do with a chemical site that is being reviewed. We may need to change our plans to take account of changes at the site.

That will be followed by a meeting this afternoon about incidents involving hazardous substances such as chemicals, asbestos or fuel spills.

How did you become an emergency planner? I came to the county council from a police background where I had also been involved in emergency planning.

What qualities do you need for the job?

You must be able to work well in a team.

Being open-minded is also essential as we often need to try new ways of working to solve problems. You also need to be confident and be able to think on your feet in an emergency.

Words at your fingertips

POEMS we may remember from childhood are now available at the touch of a computer button.

All people need to do is enter a word or a town on the library service's new web index – to be told of poems about that place or containing that word.

More volunteers are needed to input key words onto the computer database. Already, however, entering the word "Pendle" will show references to 54 poems and "Preston" yields 59 results.

Burnley librarian Susan Halstead, one of three people already indexing poems, said: "People often remember the first line of a poem or even just a few words. They can now enter those snippets and the system will direct them to the entire poem."

"Lots of people remember bits of poems from childhood and this new system will bridge that gap."

Trips down memory lane start with a visit to Lancashire County Council's Lancashire Lantern website – www.lantern.lancashire.gov.uk



– and then a click on the "Lancashire Poetry Index" button to be given options of searching for words, first lines, areas or towns.

About 2,000 poems are already

indexed, but there are tens of thousands more – and they all need to be indexed.

Anyone wishing to volunteer to index them should contact Susan on 01282 463757.

Lancashire web words

Pendle 54 results
Preston 59
Rossendale 85
Witch 10
Cotton 143
Mill 83
Lancaster 0
Riot 2
Albert the lion 0
Clogs 4

Just enter the word and see how many poems about it you can find!

... go online where words are cheap

THE Lancashire Lantern is only a very small part of Lancashire's Online Reference Library.

The computer-based library is like having a "real" library in your own living room. You don't have to get out of your armchair!

From maps to car prices, from car reliability reports to health advice, from advice on buying a

washing machine to newspaper reports on public life, from historic Lancashire pictures to days out ... the list is almost literally endless.

The library has already paid subscriptions to premium sites, such as Newsbank, for you. It will save you more than £1,000 in fees that you would have to pay if joining directly.

Some of the site is directly inputted material – as with the

poetry index. Other parts are links to other areas of the world-wide web.

Ancestry, the popular family tree site, is also free although it has to be viewed from one of the free-to-use computers within any of Lancashire's libraries.

There are literally millions of points of interest. See for yourself – it is free – at www.lancashire.gov.uk/onrl

LANCASHIRE traditions, including clogs, May Queens and pace eggs, are to be made available to all this month at Preston's Museum of Lancashire.

Sessions on pace egg play costumes will give all members of the family the chance to make a King George costume ready for a performance in a play. They will be held on Monday 2 and Friday 13 April. Separate sessions on pace eggs will be held on Wednesday 4 April.

Clog fighting used to be a "popular" activity. No one is any longer asked to kick each other – and Wednesday 11 April will be everyone's chance to peacefully decorate mini-clogs.

Details on all the sessions are available on 01772 534075.

A TRAVELLING exhibition featuring slavery and its abolition will be in the Accrington area.

The county council-backed display will be in Accrington library from 2 to 16 April and then in the New Era youth centre from 16 to 27 April.

LYTHAM library is to host a Gardeners' Question Time at 2pm, Wednesday 18 April.

Panelists include radio's Brian Carter, a local expert gardener, and Darren Bell.

WINNER of a two-night break with Britannia Hotels (Vision, March) is P Worsley of Thornbank, Blackpool.

Garden centre vouchers to be won

THIS year is set to be an exciting time for the Preston-based Barton Grange Group as its brand new garden centre and marina development starts to take shape.

The £15m development on the A6 at Brock, just north of Preston, is just five minutes from the current garden centre site at Barton.

Two Vision readers can each win £50 vouchers to spend at the current Barton Grange Garden Centre on the A6 at Barton.

As well as the new garden centre and 80-berth marina, the site will include a chandlery, restaurant, garden park and crazy golf course.

Permission has been given for a hotel, although there are no current plans to build one.

The new garden centre will be one of the biggest in the UK with its own restaurant and cafe, and a retractable roof over the outside sales area, enabling customers to shop for plants whatever the weather. It will include a farm shop stocked entirely with produce from local suppliers, as part of a commitment to being locally run and locally sourced.

The site will offer much more than the garden centre experience though.

Bordered on two sides by the



River Brock and the Lancaster Canal, and set in some of Lancashire's most beautiful countryside, the development is set to be a year-round leisure attraction.

Whilst the new marina will play an important role in bringing more people on to the canal side, the garden park will be home to a massive variety of plant species, one of the largest collections in the region, and natural habitats.

Seasonal walks will guide visitors through the park, so they can see the plants at their best whatever the time of year.

ENTRY FORM

Q: How many berths will the marina have?

A:

Name

Address

Postcode **Tel**

Return entries, by 20 April, to Barton Grange competition, Vision, County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ.
County council employees are not allowed to enter.

Exclusion zones target doorstep 'cold callers'



●PEST no-go zone: community beat manager Pc Scott Archer with residents.

DOORSTEP pests are being barred from Lancashire's newest new cold-calling "exclusion zone".

Lancashire now has six of the zones which are designed to deter dodgy salesmen, crooked builders and distraction burglars.

The county's newest zone was established last month on the Larches estate in Preston with support from residents, the county council's trading standards officers, police and Neighbourhood Watch.

Signs tell doorstep traders it is

a "no cold-call" area – but it is up to residents to tell trading standards officers if someone who appears dodgy knocks on their door.

Trading standards officer Caroline Lovett said: "It is aimed at deterring scammers."

"People can knock on doors, but they should know that residents will let us know if anyone dodgy is in the area. Residents know their rights."

"Any company that is complained about will be contacted by us and told that they are not wanted in the area."

A number of doorstep salesmen

may subsequently be untraceable – but the signs will have deterred many of them.

A growing problem on Lancashire doorsteps in recent years has been distraction burglaries and bogus officials in which one rogue keeps the householder chatting while an accomplice steals goods.

Anyone wanting advice about doorstep crime issues should ring 01772 532145.

Contact Consumer Direct on 08454 040506 with general inquiries.

Working in Lancashire

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

The finance team from LCDL



ON TARGET

for Lancashire people

Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL) is on track to beat its own targets for helping the county's economy.

value added (a profit-related indicator) as a result of direct support to organisations £4m.

Loans come in handy in East Lancs

Owned and controlled by Lancashire residents and their elected representatives, the county council's economic regeneration department closes the financial year with a healthy balance sheet and a good forecast, in both financial and human terms.

- For the same period, we have comfortably exceeded our annual target for helping Lancashire organisations perform better, achieving in excess of 1,000 against a target of 400.
- We remain on target to achieve all other annual indicators: total funding to generate business growth and improved quality of life (external private and public sector organisations and LCDL) £12.5m; jobs created and safeguarded in Lancashire as a result of direct support to organisations 300; gross

Tenants in East Lancs who need a low-cost loan but have struggled to borrow in the past are being given a new helping hand.

Handy Loans are a collaboration between local credit unions and social landlords to prevent tenants falling prey to 'doorstep lenders', who can charge upwards of 175% APR.

The new Handy Loans, arranged by East Lancashire Finance, are available to tenants of Green Vale Homes in Rossendale and Accent housing in Burnley, Pendle and Hyndburn.

Tenants simply need to join their local credit union to benefit from the offer. Further details are available from Dave McMullan at East Lancs Finance on 01706 215082.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Health benefits

COUNTY council staff will be forbidden to smoke in working hours from May.

Smoking within workplaces has been forbidden for many years but the new policy will also mean that employees can't smoke at all on county council-owned premises or when they are – in working hours – with members of the public.

Castle trips

CHILDREN'S activity tours of Lancaster Castle are planned for Wednesdays 4 and 11 April.

The 2pm tours are suitable for ages 5 to 12, but must be accompanied by an adult. Details 01524 64998.

£462,000 to speed way into town

WORK has started on a £462,000 project to benefit cyclists, walkers and horse-riders in east Lancashire.

Digging on the Brun Valley Greenway Project, a partnership project between Lancashire County Council, Burnley Council, the British Horse Society and Sustrans began in March. The project should be complete by March 2008.

The Greenway in north-east Burnley, incorporates two main routes – a five-mile stretch of the Burnley Way, and the east Burnley multi-user routes linking Burnley town centre with Harle Syke, Pike Hill and Brownside.

The routes will improve access to the countryside for bikes, horse riders and walkers, and link to a variety of recreational, natural and heritage attractions, including Thompson and Queens Parks, Rowley Lake, Towneley

Hall and Queen Street Mill Textile Museum.

It is also hoped the route will be used by cyclists as an alternative commuter route into the town centre.

The project will improve access, surfacing, drainage and signage; enrich the experience through interpretation and developing opportunities for art and habitat creation / biodiversity.

County council staff are also working with Sir John Thursby Community College and Blessed Trinity RC College to encourage pupils to walk and cycle to school, through a number of infrastructure enhancements including cycle lanes and safe crossing points.

Associated arts projects will involve community members and a number of other local schools.

Money has come from Lancashire County Council, Sustrans, SITA and Burnley Council.



From left, standing: Bill Greenwood, Chair of East Lancashire Finance (ELF); Gerard Spain, Chair of Pendle Community Credit Union (PCCU); Shaun Finegan, Accent North West Area Manager.

Seated, in front from Left: Tim Weedall, Accent North West Managing Director and Kathleen Rowley, Chair of Burnley Area Community Credit Union (BACCU).

Lancashire County Developments Ltd.

Lancashire County Council

Your council friends are here to help

Our helpful staff will assist you with:

- Blue badges for parking - telephone and online.
- NoWcards - telephone.
- Reporting anti-social behaviour on buses - telephone.
- Reporting a highways issue - telephone and online.
- Registering a birth or death - telephone
- Finding out if you might be eligible for help from social services - telephone and online.
- Applying for school places - telephone and online.

IF you are a Lancashire resident and you have a query about a county council service, the Customer Service Centre at the Red Rose Hub can answer it for you.

Nearly a quarter of a million inquiries were handled in 2006 and the majority of callers are reporting that their queries were quickly resolved by customer service officers.

The number of customer service officers continues to grow. Working hours are now 8am to 5pm and there are plans to extend them. It all means more help for the public.

Officers know their subject area and you can be assured that when you ring you will be given the answer you are looking for or connected directly to someone who does.

Lancashire residents can now use the internet or telephone to apply/inquire for a number of services including:

- Blue badges.
- NoWcards for travel.
- Reporting anti-social behaviour on

SCHOOLS

FROM 1 September parents/guardians have been able to apply online for both primary and secondary school places for their children.

The take up of this easy-to-use service has far exceeded the 5-10 per cent national online target for the first year.

In Lancashire the uptake was around 14 per cent and with some further promotion running up to the 2007 admissions times it is hopeful that the take up will be even higher.

The system is available via www.lancashire.gov.uk/e-admissions

buses.

- Reporting highways issues.
- Registering births and deaths.
- Seeking social services assistance if possible.

- Applying for school places.

And, of course, anything else that you may need to know about a county council service.

County Councillor Doreen Pollitt, county council deputy leader, said: "Access to Lancashire County Council's services needs to take many forms in order to keep pace with technology, save costs and give Lancashire residents a wide choice of ways in which to get in touch with their local authority.

"Local authorities only exist to serve.

"The Customer Service Centre is going from strength to strength and the feedback is very encouraging for the future.

"We are continuing to develop our information services and are always glad to hear of new ways of providing a better service".



● (Above) HELPFUL assistants want you to use the service you need.



● (Left) ONE in seven families are applying for school places online.

Ring now for care help

TELEPHONE inquiries covering social care for both adult and children are now being handled by our customer service officers.

The service is initially for Chorley, Leyland and South Ribble, but will extend across the whole county by the end of 2007.

Highly trained social care customer service officers, supported by professional social workers, are able to resolve the majority of customer inquiries.

More complex matters will still be referred to an appropriate social care professional.

Lancashire residents can now also check their eligibility for

receiving social care services and request a social care assessment following the launch of a new online self-referral website.

The new, easy-to-use online system enables users to find information and work out if they, their friend or relative, are eligible for a range of social care support from the county council's social services.

This is just another way in which Lancashire County Council's Customer Access Strategy is developing ways to make it easier for people to access services and information quickly and efficiently.

The online self-referral system can be found at www.lancashire.gov.uk/social-services/self-referral



Families need friends

IF you want to know how to register a birth or death in Lancashire, how to go about getting married, or forming a civil partnership, how to obtain a copy birth, marriage or death certificate, and how to find your local registrar office then you need the Registration Service.

Previously, citizens would have contacted one of a number of local offices but now that the telephone inquiry service is being delivered from the Red Rose Hub they are able to access their local registra-

tion service on one telephone number and between the hours of 8am-5pm.

The hours will be extended later this year.

A further added bonus is that as well as booking an appointment to register a birth for example, you will also be able to inquire about any other Lancashire County Council service – all during the same telephone call!

For more information about any of the services offered by the Lancashire Registration Service visit www.lancashire.gov.uk or contact 0845 053 0021.

The Customer Service Centre can be contacted on 0845 053 0000 or you can go to www.lancashire.gov.uk for an A-Z list of services

Historic school hands over its records

INSIGHTS into the world of yesteryear are awaiting any student who makes their way to Lancashire's Record Office.

Record Office archivists received the records and logs of Preston's Harris Primary School – fascinatingly for social historians it was the school attached to the former Harris Orphanage.

The school only took in non-orphaned pupils from World War Two, so its records give a peek to changing social and educational beliefs through the ages.

Archivist Bruce Jackson said: "These records could reveal a very interesting world – an insight into changing values and expectations through the years.

"The Harris is a very special school in so many ways."

Records from the school date back to 1889 and will be carefully stored to help future historians understand present and past Lancashire.



● HISTORIC handover: pupils Thomas Procter (9) and Charlotte Smith (9), headteacher Amanda Gregory pass the records to archivist Bruce.

Produced by Corporate Communications Group, Lancashire County Council (tel 01772 531095/533536). Printed by Morton's Print Ltd.

Open the archives

BOOK your place now for a voyage of discovery at Lancashire Record Office.

Two special sessions have been organised for members of the public to discover the whys and wherefores of archive catalogues.

The idea is that people will learn to use archive catalogues when undertaking research.

There will also be the chance to have a go at searching, as well as learning about other online resources, databases and finding aids.

At the end of each session there will be an opportunity to have a tour of a strongroom.

Sessions are to be held at Lancashire Record Office on Bow Lane, Preston on Friday 18 May 2007 between 10am and 12.30pm or 2pm to 4.30pm.

Contact Sandra Porter on 01772 533027 or email record.office@ed.lancsc.gov.uk for details.

Places for each session are limited so book early.