



# Vision



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

A **4-star council** Awarded top marks by the Audit Commission

March 2007

**Providing** • education • highways • trading standards • social services

## LESSON

**Making classes fun**

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# Our advisers have raised **£250** million to help someone you know pay these...

LANCASHIRE residents have now landed a huge **£250m** in previously unclaimed benefits – adding up to a major boost to the county's economy.

The cash bonanza has been brought to Lancashire since the county council's Welfare Rights Service was founded 20 years ago.

The money has relieved hardship for thousands of people who formerly did not know how to fight their way through the bene-

fits maze.

County Councillor Hazel Harding, council leader, met staff to celebrate their achievement.

She said: "The Welfare Rights Service exists to help a range of people with claims for a variety of social security and local authority benefits and tax credits.

"It puts cash into the pockets of Lancashire people who need it most and has taken away the worry and strain of claiming complex benefits.

"Just a few pounds a week means a lot to someone on a tight budget.

"This money is often spent on local goods and services and so has a positive effect on the economy and jobs in Lancashire.

"Year on year this service has raised 10 times more than its budget and that is astounding value for money.

"More people than ever are now eligible to claim a wide range of benefits – whether that be to supplement a low income, to

afford the essentials in life such as housing and utilities, or to support their family.

"Our staff ensure that people are able to make the best of their opportunities and avoid hardship by getting the help they need."

I would like to congratulate staff who have provided an invaluable service over the last twenty years and who continue to offer professional advice."

Benefits advice and help is free and confidential to all Lancashire residents.

**For more information or to request a benefit check write to:**  
**Lancashire Welfare Rights Service,**  
**Freepost, Preston PR1 8BR. For details about benefits advice in your area, contact 01772 533504.**

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 many staff trained and willing to assist.**

*Sometimes you just can't think who to ask - and this is where Vision's Shirley comes in.*

*Shirley answers all the letters she receives and some will feature on this page. Others may take a while as Shirley will seek responses from other council teams.*

*Shirley is not able to offer legal advice.*



## Let's get married

Suzanne from Chorley writes:

**M**y boyfriend and I are hoping to get married next summer. We both live in Lancashire and plan to marry there. We don't fancy getting married in a church or a registration office but don't know which venues accommodate weddings and how to go about arranging it. Can you help?

To find a venue you can visit the registration service's website [www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/birthmarriagesdeaths/](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/birthmarriagesdeaths/)

These premises are approved by Lancashire County Council in accordance with the Marriage and Civil Partnership Acts for the solemnization of marriages and the registering of civil partnerships. The registration service charges fees for conducting and registering marriages at approved premises. These fees are also available on the website.

Once your venue is agreed, if the marriage is less than 12 months to the day, you can contact the ceremonies officer to provisionally book and help plan your wedding day on **0845 053 0021**.

## That's what I go to school for

Mrs L from Padiham writes:

**M**y 14 year old daughter is looking for a part-time job for a few hours after school.

Whilst I think that it is a good idea to allow her to earn some pocket money I am concerned that it may interfere with her homework.

Are there any restrictions on the amount of hours that she can work during the week?

**Y**es there are restrictions during the week and also at weekends. On a school day a child may only work until 7pm after the close of school hours and for no more than one hour in a morning before school starts;

commencing no earlier than 7am.

No child can work for more than a total of two hours on a school day or a total of twelve hours a week during term time.

It is a legal requirement that she obtains a work permit which requires a joint effort from the child's parent and the employer to be.

Application forms are available from the Education Welfare Service.

## Close to the hedge

Mrs G from Clitheroe writes:

**W**hile walking to work each morning I have to step onto a busy road to get past a hedge that was affected by the terribly windy weather that we had in January.

I thought that it would have been trimmed by now but nothing has been done.

Part of it is at an angle where it was blown over and the branches reach right out over the pavement.

Who should I contact to complain?

**Y**ou should contact Lancashire Highways on **0845 053 0011**. You failed to mention whether the hedge is on the highway or is privately owned. Highway Authority hedges will be trimmed as required on receipt of a verified complaint. The Highway Authority cannot take arbitrary action on private property; they must serve notice of at least 21 days on the owner of the hedge, giving them notice to remove the obstruction. If they do not trim the hedge adequately within the time given the Highway Authority can do the work and charge them.

## Help to beat bullying

Mrs L from Fleetwood writes:

**I**am very worried about my eight year-old daughter. Her behaviour has changed considerably over the last few months and I believe this is due to some incidents of bullying that she has told us about. We have already spoken to her teacher about our concerns but nothing

seems to have been done. Please could you advise on the best way to deal with this?

**I**f you have concerns over your child's welfare you should in the first instance contact a teacher or head-teacher at your child's school, as you already have done. If you are not satisfied with the school's response you can write to the school governors. You can also at any time contact your Area Education Welfare Officer for advice and guidance.

You can contact Education Welfare through Lancashire County Council's Customer Service Centre on: **0845 053 0000**.

## Little children

Rebecca from Preston writes:

**I**can't afford to go back to work as I have two small children and childcare costs would be too much. For a while now I have been considering becoming a childminder and wondered what qualifications I would need?

**Y**ou need to apply to Ofsted to be registered. If you act as a child-minder without being registered, it could lead to prosecution. Although you do not need any special qualifications to be a childminder, you are expected to attend a pre-registration briefing session arranged by your local authority where the registration process will be explained.

At the end of the session you will be given an application pack. You then return the completed forms to Ofsted.

In addition your local authority will arrange for you to undertake registration courses, including first aid training.

To book a place on a briefing session or receive information on becoming a child-minder please contact the Childcare Information Service on: **0800 195 0137**.

Email: [enquiries@css.lancscc.gov.uk](mailto: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**.

# Taxing decision to save services

**MORE is to be spent on frontline services in the next 12 months following this year's budget discussions.**

Service cuts are being kept to a minimum as a result of back-office savings and improved ways of working to achieve better value for money.

As a result, the county council's share of April's Council Tax bills will rise by 4.95 per cent.

The final bill that people receive combines the council taxes from the county council, district councils, the police and the fire authority. As such, any final increase may be higher or lower than 4.95 per cent.

County Councillor Anne Brown, Cabinet member for Resources and Performance, said: "Time and time again people tell me how much they value the county council's services."

"For the first time, the county council's Cabinet announced their budget options two months earlier than usual, in November, to allow more people to have their say through the Lancashire Local meetings. This resulted in wider consultation and fewer cuts to frontline services."

"We have already made £10m of back-office savings by reducing bureaucracy and introducing more efficient ways of working. In contrast, frontline services have received above inflation increases in their budgets."

"This increase is higher than I would like. I recognise the difficulty that many Lancashire residents have in finding the money to pay their council tax bills, and this is not something I take lightly."

# Moving is as easy as ABC

A SUCCESSFUL business has shunned a move half-way round the globe to stay in Lancashire.

ABC chemicals, which employs 18 local people, could have followed other businesses' examples and been on its way to a cheap foreign location when it ran out of room at its current location.

But, thanks to the help of Lancashire County Developments Ltd, the former Todmorden company has planted itself firmly in the Red Rose County.

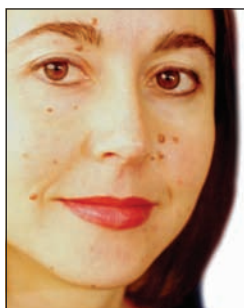
Now the 18-strong workforce, situated at the Link 59 business park in Clitheroe, is expanding as export demands grow from exotic locations such as the Philippines, Italy, Korea and Japan.

The move has been made possible thanks to support from Rural Recovery Action and Lancashire County Council's development company, Lancashire County Developments Ltd – and technical support from Lancashire Rural Futures.

Companies thinking of setting up business in Lancashire can call LCDL on **01772 551888**.

Don't forget - your county councillor can help. Contact details are available on **0845 0530000** or at: [www.lancashire.gov.uk](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk)

You can also try your area's County Information Centre where staff are trained to help the public



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

**[www.lancashire.gov.uk/vacancies](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/vacancies)**





## Biology teacher named top of the tree

GIANT snails and 10inch long millipedes are providing an interesting insight into the world of science in one Lancashire school.

Science teacher of the year Michele Grimshaw believes science is easy to teach when it is made fun. So studying millipedes can teach about biology while explorations into noisy chairs and tables can lead to vital physics lessons into how sound travels.

Science graduate Michele has only been teaching for 10 years. But her inspiring lessons at

Marsden Community Primary School in Nelson have resulted in a national award as primary school science teacher of the year.

Michele said: "Children tend to think of stuffy men in white coats when they think of science."

"In fact it is about everyday life. A child, for example, may be on antibiotics and that can be the basis of a lesson into biology."

"We did another project on how to stop chairs making a clattering sound when put on tables at the end of the day. That led to lessons into how sound is made and how materials such as sponge can

deadend the sound.

"That led us to think of the safety aspects of different materials as you can't realistically tie sponges to the bottom of chairs."

"Once you get children thinking about such matters they are actually thinking of science whether they realise it or not."

The award was sponsored by the Times Educational Supplement and the AstraZeneca Teaching Trust.

● **TEACHER of the year Michele with pupils from Marsden Primary.**



# Working against flu

## Plans to reduce effects of flu pandemic are not to be sneezed at

**FOR most healthy people, catching a dose of the flu results in a trip to the doctor and a few days spent recovering in bed.**

But a major influenza pandemic could mean so many people are ill at once that the day-to-day running of services from schools to hospitals and social services is seriously affected.

The Government has identified that a major influenza pandemic is now one of the biggest risks facing the UK and local planners have been working hard to ensure Lancashire is prepared.

The role of Lancashire County Council's Emergency Planning service is to prepare for, and if necessary, respond to major emergencies that may affect people or the environment.

Since identifying the risk of a flu pandemic, planners have been working with other public services across the county, including health bodies, emergency service,

district councils and even the military to ensure effective plans are in place.

Influenza pandemics occur when a new virus, which people have no immunity to, emerges and starts spreading like normal influenza.

It is expected that a pandemic would begin to affect the UK months after having started elsewhere in the world.

Because it will be a new flu strain, existing flu jabs will not give any protection and it could be months before a vaccine is developed.

A pandemic is likely to cause severe illness and more deaths than seasonal flu.

With many people potentially absent from work due to illness during a pandemic, emergency planners are considering the best course of action to prevent the virus spreading and support services which will experience intense pressure due to staff sickness.

Whilst health services would take the lead on the incident nationally,



● **HUB: Emergency Planning's new home**

local planners will advise on possible school closures, whether people should use public transport and make alternative arrangements to support vulnerable people when services are stretched.

Solutions could include transferring staff from non-essential jobs to help where needed, setting up telephone advice lines to keep people informed and prioritising work.

Bernard Kershaw, principal emergency planning officer, said: "We've been doing a lot of work with partner agencies to identify some of the problems that a flu

pandemic could cause.

"Everything from emergency services and hospitals to social services and funeral arrangements could be put under severe pressure."

"Our role is to look at what is likely to happen and make sure we have plans in place to respond to the situation and get back to normal as soon as possible."

"We recently took part in a national exercise designed to test our readiness for a flu pandemic. I am confident that we've identified all the major issues and are in a good position to respond effectively."

## New base for planners

EMERGENCY Planning staff tried out their new home at the Red Rose Hub when they staged an exercise to test the county's response in the event of a radiation incident.

The recovery exercise was held at the new facility in Preston which provides office space and conferencing facilities for a number of county council services.

It is now the home for Emergency Planning in Lancashire, replacing an older facility that was vacated last year.

Emergency services from across Lancashire responded to a leak at Springfields Fuels Ltd in Fylde and plans to evacuate surrounding homes and schools to temporary rest centres were put into action.

Experts from Springfields, the Environment Agency, Health Protection Agency and County Laboratory practiced their role in taking soil, water and air sam-

ples and advising residents and farmers on how to avoid any risks associated with the leak.

Staff from the agencies involved played the role of the national media and put officials under the spotlight in a series of press conferences.

Principal Emergency Planning Officer, Bernard Kershaw, said: "We have detailed plans in place in Lancashire to deal with all kinds of large-scale emergencies."

"Exercises like this are a valuable opportunity to test these plans and make sure staff from all agencies are trained and well prepared to ensure the county can deal with any such incident and return to normality as soon as possible."

"I'm very pleased with the facilities at the Hub. We have everything we need to be able to organise this type of training which is essential to Lancashire's emergency preparedness."

## Waste not, want not

NEW figures show that Lancashire is recycling more than any other county in the North of England.

In the last year, an additional 132,000 tonnes of rubbish were recycled, compared to five years ago - the same weight as 800 jumbo jets.

If this waste had been sent to landfill, the disposal costs would have been around £5.67m, due to landfill tax and other related charges.

Recently released Government figures confirm that Lancashire is the leading county council for recycling in the north of England, with an impressive 35 per cent of rubbish recycled last year, beating the Government's target for the county of 30 per cent.

Lancashire is also in the top ten performing county councils in England and the county's performance is eight per cent higher than the national average.

County Councillor Tony Martin, Cabinet member for sustainable development said: "This impressive figure reflects the efforts of Lancashire people, who have really taken the recycling message on board."

"There has also been significant investment in recycling across the county, with our performance increasing from 12 per cent in just five years."

Over 90 per cent of people in Lancashire have household recycling collections and the county council's network of Household Waste Recycling Centres is recognised as amongst the best in the UK.

He added: "We will continue working towards our ambitious target to recycle over half of Lancashire's rubbish by 2015."

# New smoking age to stub out illegal sales

LANCASHIRE Trading Standards service has backed moves to increase the age limit for buying tobacco to 18, declaring it will help in the fight against underage sales.

Officers say the change will help retailers to refuse sales to minors by putting tobacco in the same age-bracket as alcohol and other age-restricted goods.

David Johnnie, principal officer responsible for age-related sales, said: "Retailers will

find it easier to comply with the law when the legal age for buying tobacco is raised to 18 as they can adopt a blanket policy of refusing sales to anyone who looks under-21."

"We have been working with traders for many years to cut under-age sales in Lancashire and this is another step forward."

"We will be working alongside our health partners to support this move by conducting more test purchasing operations to identify those unscrupulous retailers who continue to flout the law."

The Government is to raise the legal minimum age at which tobacco can be bought in England and Wales from 16 to 18 years from 1 October 2007.

The legislation will follow the introduction of a ban on smoking in public and workplaces from 1 July 2007.

County Councillor Jean Battle, Cabinet member for community planning and partnerships, said: "The current age restrictions date back to the beginning of the last century, well before scientific evidence was showed the real health impact

of smoking."

"Now that we know of the dangers of smoking we must do everything possible to stop young people getting access to cigarettes and we welcome this change in the law."

Jacqui Thompson Head of Public Health Development at North Lancashire PCT, said: "Each cigarette contains a cocktail of over 4,000 chemicals many of which are carcinogenic. Due to the addictive nature of cigarettes every effort should be made to stop young people smoking."

## 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

**I**N the last edition of Vision we reported on the county council's

**announcement to help tackle climate change.**

The subject has resulted in one of our

liveliest postbags as the debate on how to protect our environment heats up.

We received far more

letters than we could publish here, but all correspondence has been passed to our climate change team.

## Scheme to go green

I HAVE already written a letter of support to the county council leader with reference to the county council's major initiative to tackle the effects of Lancashire's local climate change.

You ask what Lancashire should be doing about climate change. Perhaps I may supply part of the answer.

Fylde has now established an initiative to turn the borough into the most energy-efficient in the country.

We are focussing on involving every sector of Fylde life in the battle to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

Work has begun on five strategic plans involving

schools, all local businesses, the domestic sector, the public sector and rural Fylde.

The first has now been launched and every school is being surveyed to determine its energy and waste emissions, its power and gas usage, and targets have been set for each school so that children can play a part in securing their future.

BAE Systems has also worked out a strategy which will help us involve all sections of Fylde business, and special efforts are being made to develop separate strategies for those involved with tourism, leisure and retail.

If every borough was to pursue such a focussed approach then without doubt we could, within a reasonable timescale, be

starting to post real improvements.

The FloWe (Fylde low energy initiative steering committee) project has received assurance from United Utilities and National Grid in being able to acquire data to accurately measure gas and electricity usage within the borough. The Environment Agency is also helping work out our carbon dioxide footprint.

I think that you will see that this initiative takes forward the same objectives that the county council seeks. It is already demonstrating what can be done with a concerted local effort.

**THE RT HON  
MICHAEL JACK  
MP for Fylde**

● It's great to see support from members of

Parliament and members of the public. The county council is already an active partner in the FloWe scheme and is seeking to further strengthen its involvement.

**Andrew Mullaney**, county council climate change team.

## Tree time

I READ with interest your proposals for planting trees to help the environment (Vision, February).

Behind my block of houses is a plot of land that used to be used for allotments and gardens.

In recent years, however, it has been used only for dumping rubbish.

To plant trees on it would improve the environment greatly and amount to a much-needed

facelift for the area.

The land would then be a great asset as well as doing so much good for the environment.

**MRS J WILCOCK**  
Accrington

## Not all sunny

I WAS encouraged to read, in Feb edition of Vision, about LCC plans to reduce carbon emissions.

Whilst I wholeheartedly agree that prompt action needs to be taken I am somewhat concerned when citizens are encouraged to install solar panels, great idea!

But what next? your council tax goes up as you have "added value" to your property.

Come on get real.

**Brian Leyden**  
Euxton

## Boiling point

LANCASHIRE County Council should be encouraging businesses and householders to replace their fossil fuel burning boilers with biomass boilers.

They are more expensive to install but grants are available and once up and running they are cheaper to run and better for the environment,

because they are carbon neutral.

It needs some local businesses and councils to convert over to these boilers to try and kick start the wood fuel industry in this area.

**JOHN GRIMSHAW**

## Light work

THE front page of February's Vision claimed that "10 per cent of all streetlights are powered by renewable energy".

If, as we are given to understand, all electricity is fed into the national grid (a pool of energy), how is it possible to identify the source of the energy being used?

**H L MILLARD**  
Burnley

● We buy certified energy from renewable sources. The news is even better than we reported - from April, 100 per cent of all Lancashire streetlights will be powered by renewable energy - **editor**.

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

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Undercover at museum

PEOPLE can become "under the covers" investigators as museum staff take part in National Bed Month.

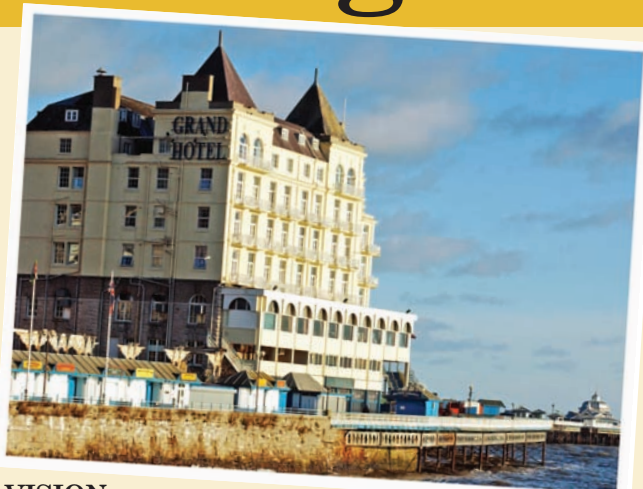
Turton Tower is offering "hands on" activities and the chance to find out what lives in the sheets of a Tudor bed at 1.30pm on Saturday 24 March. The session will also include craft activities.

The same venue is offering sessions entitled "Shhh, Keep Mum Guessing" at 1.30pm on Sunday 18 March. It offers the chance to make a surprise gift for mum with craft activities inspired by Tudors and Victorians.

Turton Tower is a distinctive 15th-century English country house set in relaxing woodlands on the edge of the West Pennine Moors.

For further details about these events contact 01204 852203 or visit [www.lancs.museums.gov.uk](http://www.lancs.museums.gov.uk)

# Win a great hotel break



### VISION

**has teamed up with Britannia Hotels to offer readers the chance of a two-night break for two at a choice of destinations in Britain.**

Britannia offer the business or leisure traveller modern facilities including health and leisure clubs, restaurants, bars and night-clubs at 33 hotels.

There are a range of hotels in England, Scotland and Wales, including city centre, sea-side, entertainment, country house and airport hotels. Each one features traditional en-suite accommodation and high-tech facilities.

One of the venues, the Grand Hotel

in Llandudno, is a splendid Victorian building in a prime location overlooking the promenade. Nestled at the foot of the Great Orme, there are magnificent views over the bay.

Llandudno is Wales' largest

seaside town and a great holiday destination for all the family. The resort and surrounding areas are packed with exciting places to visit and lots of things to see and do.

To be in with a chance of winning our superb prize of a two night stay with bed and breakfast at any Britannia Hotel answer the question before the closing date:

**How many destinations are available from Britannia Hotels?**

For more information about Britannia Hotels in the UK, please visit [www.britanniahotels.com](http://www.britanniahotels.com)

Details of rail transport can be found at [www.virgintrains.com](http://www.virgintrains.com) - by phoning 08457 222 333 or by visiting any staffed railway station or rail-appointed travel agent or website.

Send your entry to:  
Britannia Hotels competition  
Vision, County Hall, Preston  
PR1 8XJ.

**The winner of last month's competition is: M. Astley from Clitheroe.**



## CHIEF ENGINEER

**Salary £45,849-£50,436**

**37 hours per week**

Applications are invited for the post of Chief Engineer within Lancashire County Property Group, following the retirement of the current post holder. The successful candidate will be highly motivated, forward thinking, committed to sustainable design with a progressive engineering approach; be a member of CIBSE, or equivalent, with a minimum of 10 years post qualification experience. Previous experience of managing staff is essential as well as leadership skills, business and financial planning and a strong desire to succeed in a commercial environment.

The post of Chief Engineer is part of the multi-disciplinary Building Design Unit responsible for the design of new buildings as well as works to Lancashire's existing portfolio of 2,113 buildings.

**Closing date for receipt of completed applications: 30 March 2007**

For further information and application forms please visit our website address: [www.lancashire.gov.uk](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk) or telephone 01772 533383 (24 hour answer-phone service)

You can email your application forms back to:

[rd.personnel@css.lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:rd.personnel@css.lancashire.gov.uk) or send to: Resources Directorate Personnel Unit, PO Box 78, County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ.

Please quote job ref. RD/07/018

Lancashire County Council is working towards achieving a workforce reflective of the population of Lancashire and therefore would encourage applications from people from ethnic backgrounds who are under represented in our workforce.



All bookings are strictly subject to availability and may not be available at some hotels at peak times or when there is an event in the area. Cannot be used in conjunction with any offer. Cancellations must be made at least 72 hours prior to arrival. Offer based on standard

room including breakfast for two consecutive nights. Any additional costs must be paid on departure directly to the hotel. All bookings must be made in advance of arrival at the hotel. No changes can be made once the booking has been confirmed.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### What Now? book on offer

YOUNG people in Lancashire can pick up a brand new guide to life – for free!

The latest edition of the What Now? handbook and CD has been launched to give all the information young people need to get the best out of the services provided for them.

What Now? is an information and advice service for young people in Lancashire aged 11-25.

Run by Lancashire County Council's Youth and Community Service, What Now? provides information on everything young people might need to know about - from education to claiming benefits - from the dangers of drugs to the benefits of taking a gap year.



● What Now? book

All information is totally impartial and given in complete confidence.

As well as an easy-to-use handbook and CD Rom, there are also walk-in Info Centres at locations across the county, plus a number of interactive services including freephone helpline, text and email enquiry services – all staffed 10am-10pm each day.

Anyone wanting to get their hands on a book or CD should contact 01254 825155 or call in to your local What Now? information centre.

Information on the service is also available via the Internet at [www.whatnow.co.uk](http://www.whatnow.co.uk)

### Get a load of free music

THERE may be no such thing as a free lunch, but music lovers can satisfy their appetite for free thanks to a new download.

The Lancashire Sinfonietta, one of the country's best-loved orchestras, has made a full album's worth of music available on the internet. Favourites from Handel and Telemann can all be downloaded, along with the album artwork, from a host of websites.

You can find the download on [www.bluefroguk.com](http://www.bluefroguk.com) and many of the well-known download sites such as mp3.com.

# Road quality and value face Keith's scrutiny

**THE picture was clear when a county councillor looked beneath the surface of the everyday life of a street works inspector.**

Each county councillor represents you ... so County Councillor Keith Young took to the streets to ensure you receive value for money in road repairs.

Thousands of holes are dug by utility companies each year in the county and it is up to the county council's inspectors to ensure they are repaired properly and promptly.

Councillor Young spent time in the Bamber Bridge and Lostock Hall areas with inspector Andy Iley as part of the county council's "back to the floor" programme of putting elected members on the service frontline.

Councillor Young said: "Roads and pavements are regularly dug up for things such as water, electricity, gas and cables – and street inspectors ensure the utility companies repair

them properly and leave them as they find them.

"The highways belong to the public via Lancashire County Council and our inspectors ensure, in effect, that no council tax money is spent repairing damage done by private companies.

"Historically there have been problems with some utility companies, but Andy and his colleagues now have an electronic system which receives information to say when work has started."

The inspectors make sure the work is done quickly so as to minimise traffic delays.

Start and end dates for the work are agreed in advance and should be adhered to.

They also make sure that all equipment is removed from the site.

Councillor Young added: "It's our highway and the various companies should leave it in good condition.

"Our inspectors are doing a very interesting job and a very good job in guaranteeing public safety and value for money."



● COUNTY Councillor Keith Young goes "back to the floor" to check value and quality.

## County is at the centre of diversity

**PEOPLE from across Lancashire have been celebrating equality and partnership working.**

Over 80 people, including adults with learning disabilities and carers, met at the Ribblebank resource centre in Preston at a multi-cultural and multi-faith event.

Richard Jones, Executive Director of Adult and Community Services, hailed the success of the day. He said: "The range of services provided at Ribblebank centre is an example of how we are developing services that meet the needs of all communities."

"Ribblebank is a purpose-built day centre providing support services for 33 adults (16-64 years of age) with a

learning disability and complex needs.

"Around 13% of people who use the centre are from minority ethnic communities.

"This event is a real example of how we can integrate our services and build essential partnerships with agencies and community groups.

"We are committed to promoting equality and diversity across social care services.

"This is delivered by our staff valuing differences and ensuring we provide services that reflect the diverse cultural make-up of Lancashire."

Lancashire's 1.1 million population is made up of a culturally diverse mix of people from different cultural backgrounds and faiths.

It is estimated that around 5.3 percent of the population are from black and ethnic minority groups, with predominately Muslim communities of Bangladesh and Pakistani origin living within four main districts including Preston and Burnley.

In 2005, the county council undertook massive refurbishment of the Ribblebank resource centre.

New facilities were installed and adaptations to cater for those with more complex needs who need extra care such as hoists, access for wheelchairs and a sensory relaxation room were also included.

The refurbishment was part of the Council's development of Preston Day Services for adults with a learning disability.



● LET'S celebrate: Richard Jones meets partygoers at the Ribblebank resource centre.

## Plan for high-tech help and training to keep independence at home

**FINELY-tuned packages of intensive support are to be made available for older people who need help to return home from hospital.**

Maximising people's independence is the aim of re-abling, a planned programme to help them learn all over again the skills they need to live at home.

The six-week programme involves such skills as learning to cook and wash – and includes specialist

equipment to help people with such simple tasks as putting on their socks!

Project manager Joe Slater said: "It is a very intensive way to teach older people the skills they need for daily life.

"If someone is discharged from hospital we will send someone to provide care and also to teach them skills such as cooking and dressing.

"The re-abling process we are planning involves

looking at the level of support they need on a weekly basis and increasing it or decreasing it as necessary.

"After six weeks we would hope they would be at a maximum level of independence. In the past they may have had too much, or too little, support. This new process will ensure they have precisely the support they need."

Details of the service are still being negotiated but the programme is expected to start in the spring.



# Working in Lancashire

**Lancashire County Developments Ltd**

The county council's economic development department



Based on this fantastic track record, Family Groups were then awarded £87,000 from Children in Need to continue their good work.

Gail Mason, project co-ordinator at Family Groups, said: "What we have been able to achieve in Skelmersdale thanks to Grants for Growth is fantastic – just to see people's confidence growing is so rewarding. It really does change people's lives."

Gail is currently working with LCDL to assist other community groups in Lancashire to help set up their own Family Groups projects.

Another group which built on the success of its Grants for Growth project to secure additional funding is the Pioneer Community Club in Bacup, which has just been awarded £100,000 of European funding.

## Grants for Growth blooming all over Lancashire

**Lancashire Grants for Growth has just broken the £1 million barrier in grants awarded to voluntary, community and faith sector organisations across Lancashire.**

Thanks to Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL) and the European Social Fund, communities in the county are working together to help people on their 'out of work into work' journey, and move them into training, volunteering, education or employment.

And some groups who have benefited from Grants for Growth have gone on to gain further funding, thanks to the success of their project.

Family Groups in Skelmersdale secured a grant of £2,700 from Grants for Growth to run a seven-week training course for 15 unemployed mums and dads, that resulted in all 15 securing employment.



Participants in the community cohesion project 'Welcome Stories', kick-started by Lancashire Grants for Growth, pictured on the steps of Lancaster Town Hall.

Gavin Smith from the Pioneer Club said: "Our Grants for Growth project gave us vital evidence to support our application for funding to extend the project."

**County Councillor Tony Martin**, a board member at LCDL, said: "I have been amazed and delighted at the wide variety of projects these small grants have managed to support. I have seen video editing and CD production; capacity-building for starting your own business; help for a nursery project and support for some of our most vulnerable citizens, all delivered locally. A real demonstration of the county council working locally, helping people to help themselves to work, prosper and succeed throughout Lancashire."

**County Councillor Niki Penney**, Chair of Lancashire County Developments Ltd, said: "Grants for Growth has been one of the most satisfying projects in which LCDL has been involved. So often the only obstacle to employment, volunteering, training or starting your own business is a few thousand pounds. Grants for Growth can pay to eliminate all those frustrating barriers, whether they are transport, care costs for children and dependants, courses, equipment and so on. These grants have given new life to so many Lancastrians who thought they had no future at all."

**Leader of the County Council Hazel Harding**, said: "I am always pleased to hear about the success of these grants, which – although relatively small – often kick-start projects that provide real, grassroots help for Lancashire people. It is particularly satisfying when the outcomes of a Grants for Growth project can be used to lever in extra funding, and I am pleased to say this is often the case, resulting in longer-term and sustainable projects working with some of our most vulnerable groups."

**County Councillor Sean Serridge**, Lancashire's Young People's Champion, said: "One of the great aspects of Grants for Growth projects is that they often offer an alternative at a crucial point for young people who may otherwise face barriers or perhaps make the wrong choices. Some of the schemes we have supported have made an enormous difference to the direction their lives have taken and I am proud that Grants for Growth has helped so many of our young people develop, have fun and stay on the right track."

Lancashire Grants for Growth has over 200 projects across the county, with £400,000 of funding still available. For further information and advice on how your organisation may be able to benefit from Lancashire Grants for Growth please call Colette Taylor at LCDL on 01772 551888.

**Lancashire County Developments Ltd.**

**Lancashire**  
County Council

# Help us stop drink-fuelled troublemakers

Speak your mind on what should be done to curb young drinkers

**ORDINARY people are being asked to help tackle the problem of young people and excessive drinking.**

County councillors established a task group to investigate the problem in the autumn and have already heard from drinkers, trading standards officers – who enforce the age-limit laws – and youth and community workers.

But the most important people of all are ... members of the public.

Everyone is invited to write in. Their views will be incorporated into a report containing recommendations for policy changes.

County Councillor Susan Shorrock, task group leader, said: "Everyone thinks of drugs as a major problem, but alcohol has even more of an impact."

"In the North West, more than four out of 10 shopkeepers claim to have

experienced some sort of violent attack for refusing underage sales.

"Part of the answer is finding out what problems young people have to behave like this. They are also the victims of a variety of pressures."

"We are piecing together a fascinating picture. We still have to speak to a number of people in the trade and it is time to allow ordinary people to speak."

Questions being asked include why young people drink, what can be done to make them see its consequences and what should be done. People, however, can make any point they like about young people and alcohol.

**What should be done? Is there a problem? Write to the Editor, Vision, County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ. Email: [neil.graham@css.lancscc.gov.uk](mailto:neil.graham@css.lancscc.gov.uk) or [scrutiny@css.lancscc.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@css.lancscc.gov.uk)**

## Time detectives join library trail



**TIME detectives are embarking on a mystery trail designed to get people interested in libraries and history.**

A thought-provoking display in Chorley library compares children's lifestyles now and in Victorian times.

The "texting generation" is being invited in from local schools to compare and contrast beef tongue hash and pizza, ginger beer in earthenware pots and Coca Cola, Nintendo consoles and whip and tops.

And then they use the exhibits, books and even computers to find clues to a historic treasure trail in the library.

Librarian Linda Langford said: "The contrast in lifestyles brings history alive – and children learn to enjoy libraries at the same time."

"Nothing illustrates the differences

● (Above) Children at St Laurence CE Primary School visit the time trail.

● (Right) Robert Pilkington, rear, and Lewis Deardon get to grips with yesterday.



between the Victorian era and today better than the way children use their spare time. I can't imagine that the Playstation generation would be happy amusing themselves with a hopscotch or a home-made skipping rope.

"And I suspect that today's children, brought up on a diet of burgers and pizza, would not look forward to a dinner of beef tongue stew with much enthusiasm."

rather than a fortnight in Spain we all aspire to these days."

The display and treasure trail are linked to Samuel's Chorley, a resource pack for schools that charts the 19th century boyhood life of Samuel Gartside.

The pack was written by staff member Diane Rhodes.

The treasure trail uses pictures, maps and other documents to depict 19th century Chorley life.

Linda adds: "Learning to enjoy libraries at an early age is something that will last a lifetime."



# Cash aid builds home for Monty and animal pals



● Carl Dorsett and Vicky Birtwistle introduce Creature the lizard and Casper the snake to their new home while County Councillor Sean Serridge and Lord's House Farm chief executive Mary Walker look on.

**A SLIPPERY set of customers in Rishton – including Monty the python – have a swish new pad, complete with jungle theme murals, ceiling netting and rainforest sounds.**

The reptile house at Lord's House Farm, on Wilpshire Road in

Rishton, has just had a facelift and all the work has been carried out by a team of people with learning difficulties, who helped with all aspects of the project and have gained valuable skills and experience along the way.

The project was financed by Grants for Growth, European

Social Fund money matched by and made available through Lancashire County Developments Ltd, the county council's economic development department.

Lord's House Farm provides individual and fulfilling day care for disabled and disadvantaged adults and young people by offer-

ing animal therapy, with horses, goats, sheep, mini-donkeys, llamas, an emu, reindeer, birds – and, of course, reptiles.

Staff at Lord's House are keen to hear from health or social work professionals who work with people who might benefit from individual and fulfilling daytime activ-

ity at the centre. Lord's House can be contacted on 01254 877400 or via the website at [www.lords-housefarm.co.uk](http://www.lords-housefarm.co.uk).

Anyone wishing to know more about Grants for Growth can contact LCDL, Lancashire County Council's economic development department, on 01772 551888.

## Another new centre for children opens its doors

CIVIC VIPs, children and parents were out in force when the newest of Lancashire's children's centres opened.

For a new venture, Staghills Children's Centre in Newchurch has a lot of history. It opened as a nursery school in 1955 but recent expansion has added dramatically to the services it offers.

Lancashire will have 61 children's centres by March 2008 and, including Staghills, 32 are already open.

Central to Staghills is early education and a 30-place full daycare nursery for children up to age five.

Also on offer are computer classes for parents, ante-natal and post-natal sessions with midwives, classes on parenting with confidence and baby massage, parent and toddler sessions, massage therapy and "achieving together" classes to help parents back into work.

The theory is that learning should never be dull, so Staghills features singing, music-making, puppet shows,

festivals and seasonal lessons in its own wooded area.

Other facilities include courses on subjects such as first aid, health, cookery and English and also parental workshops on child

development.

Lancashire's children's centres are dedicated to the wellbeing of parents as well as children.

For more details on Staghills, ring 01706 213303 or

visit: [www.staghills.lancsngfl.ac.uk](http://www.staghills.lancsngfl.ac.uk)

For details of children's centres countywide, telephone the Childcare Information Service on freephone 0800 1950137 or visit: [www.childrenfirst.lancashire.gov.uk](http://www.childrenfirst.lancashire.gov.uk)



● TIME to celebrate: Lancashire's latest children's centre opens in Newchurch.

## Schools get help for safer pupil journeys

TEACHERS in Lancashire are being given an innovative toolkit to help make their pupils' journeys safer on the county's roads.

The appropriately named Journeys primary guide is packed with vital safety information and is presented in an attractive, contemporary, colourful ring binder with an accompanying CD-ROM.

It has been specially designed by the county council's Road Safety Group to help headteachers, teachers and governors integrate road safety easily into the school curriculum.

Jackie Noblett, year one teacher at Kennington County Primary School, Fulwood, helped to pilot the resource.

She said: "This is a fantastic way to incorporate road safety into the curriculum, with information on writing a road safety policy, lesson plans, resources, and advice on how to take part in pedestrian and cycle training."

"Not only can we use Journeys within school, but it also includes information for parents which is ideal for home-school communications."

Amanda Downes, road safety adviser and author of Journeys, said: "We are proud to present Journeys as a flagship document for all our road safety services for primary schools in Lancashire."

The guide is currently being distributed to all schools across the county. The Road Safety Group will be in touch with your school in the coming months to introduce this must-have resource.

For more information on the work of the Road Safety Group call 0800 328 1635 or log onto: [www.lancashire.gov.uk/roadsafety](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/roadsafety)



# School shows the safer way to travel

Ring Melissa Horridge on  
**01772 530699**  
to book your place on a  
School Travel Plan  
workshop in April or May

What is it like around a school near you at around 8.30am? Is it calm and tranquil, as a new school day starts, or is there congestion and chaos? Read on to see how a School Travel Plan can help



●THE Travel Plan led to the school gaining lollipop lady Lynn England, pictured here with governor Michael Godbold, son Connor and fellow pupils James and Ruth Peacock.

## BUSY roads and poor accident statistics started one school on the path to safer travel.

It is two years ago since governors and teachers at St James' CE Primary School decided something needed to be done to improve child safety on the journey between school and home.

With help from Lancashire County Council's School Travel Plan experts, the school now has an extra lollipop lady, improved sight lines on nearby roads – and will soon have an extra school entrance to relieve congestion.

Michael Godbold, governor at the Leyland school, said: "We wanted to cut down on the cars coming to school. To do that we had to ensure parents knew it was safe for their children to walk or cycle."

"We found that problems went further than just applying for yellow lines. We looked at traffic-calming measures on one road but realised then that buses would no



●THE Travel Plan led to the school gaining flashing lights on warning signs.

longer use the route.

"We found there were a lot of things we could do such as trimming hedges and overhanging trees and improving lines of vision on corners."

"There was a particular problem on one junction that was

detering children from walking and cycling to school. We sorted that by getting a lollipop lady.

"We also got money for flashing signs and will soon be constructing a new school entrance, so that people do not have to approach the school on the main road."

"The reward, so far, has been an enormous increase in parents letting their children walk to school."

All the improvements were done after the school's transport problems were analysed in a comprehensive School Travel Plan. County council advisers helped the school – and pointed out things that had been missed.

Other improvements, paid for with a county council School Travel Plan grant, included bike sheds to encourage pupils to cycle to school.

Michael added: "The advisers were able to spot possible problems that we had missed."

"The whole process has been very thorough and well worthwhile."

## THERE'S A WORLD OF TRICKSTERS OUT THERE. DON'T BE FOOLED BY THEM

**Julian Edwards**

Senior fair trading officer,  
Lancashire County Council



A REGULAR message that goes out from Trading Standards is about deceptive marketing and scams which are circulating.

A recent national investigation has highlighted the scope of the problem and reinforced the need for people to be vigilant not only for ourselves but for relatives friends and neighbours.

The scams, it is estimated, cost Lancashire residents £70m each year or £60 per person per year. Clearly some people will be losing very little while others may be losing very large sums.

The important message is that this can affect us all. We have this year had individuals in Lancashire conned into paying sums of £80,000 and £50,000. Countless thousands will have been scammed out of £5 or £10.

The beauty of any scam is that it is cleverly targeted at the audience. The scams where individuals lose large amounts will have put a lot of effort into convincing the victim that they are going to benefit.

The mass scams work by targeting tens or hundreds of thousands who when they have fallen victim are unlikely to take the matter further in view of the amount involved or the realisation, and embarrassment, that they have been misled.

The reality is that less than one in 20 people misled complain, resulting in the perpetrators being able to continue and making it more difficult to target and take action against those involved.

Everyone is vulnerable and everyone needs to take steps to avoid being misled and to complain if they have been misled.

Where you have been misled into paying money in a marketing scam, register your complaint with Trading Standards via Consumer Direct on **08454 040506**.

You will be helping to ensure that the perpetrators are investigated and helping to protect others from being misled.

Register with the Mailing Preference Service (**0845 7034599**)

## Types of scams

- Prize draw/sweepstake scams
- Foreign lottery scams
- Work at home and business opportunity scams
- Premium rate telephone prize scams
- Miracle health and slimming cure scams
- African advance fee frauds/foreign money making scams
- Clairvoyant/psychic mailing scams
- Pyramid sale and chainletter scams
- Bogus holiday club scams
- Internet dialer scams
- High-risk investment scams

Telephone Preference Service (**0845 0700707**). While these are not perfect the message is clear: if you receive calls or letters they are then clearly a scam.

## Remember:

**If it's too good to be true it probably is.**

"Congratulations you have been awarded a major-value prize," announcements are always scams unless you have really entered.

Never pay to collect a prize. No international lottery, even if you do take part, asks for a fee for the prize.

**Where you have not entered a competition, a letter saying you have been awarded a prize is inevitably misleading.**

A minimum-value prize can simply be a discount off the purchase of an item at an expensive price.

**Scratch cards and premium rate number competitions will lead you to believe that you have won a major prize. The prize, if it exists, will be of little value.**

Seek independent advice when considering high value investments, timeshare or holiday clubs.

# Book a place to make your school safer

LANCASHIRE County Council is supporting schools in their efforts to encourage viable alternatives to the car, such as walking or cycling, through the development of a School Travel Plan.

We want all schools to have a Travel Plan by 2010. Funding and guidance is available to assist them with the process.

The School Travel Plan team has been holding a number of short workshops for headteachers, governors and teachers. The half-day sessions help schools make a start in developing a Travel Plan that will not only attract funding, but will also put an action plan in place to encourage more children to make healthier choices for the journey to school.

Workshops take schools, stage by stage, through the Travel Plan process, and gives them ideas they may like to consider for

their own schools.

The School Travel Plan is a document, produced by the school, that sets out a package of complementary measures to encourage and enable alternatives to the car for the journey to school such as walking and cycling, or the bus for longer journeys.

During each session, delegates build up a resource file that they can take away with them containing all the information they need to develop an effective Travel Plan, that they can tailor to the needs of their particular school.

They also get details of the School Travel Plan Development Grant (£500 for primary schools and £1,000 for secondary schools) that they can claim to help get them started – perhaps to pay a small honorarium to a parent or governor to co-ordinate the plan, or to pay for staff cover to release a teacher to help.

To date, 156 schools have an approved Travel Plan and have each accessed the

appropriate Devolved Formula Capital Grant. For primary schools this is currently £3,750 plus £5 per pupil on roll, with £5,000 plus £5 per pupil on roll available for high schools.

This capital funding is designed to help schools put measures in place on their site to encourage and enable walking or cycling to school.

For example, after submitting a successful Travel Plan, Lostock Hall High School identified the potential for more pupils to cycle, but their cycle shed was badly in need of replacement.

The funding has enabled an attractive new cycle storage shelter to be provided.

Dorothy Crane, who leads the School Travel Plan team, said: "We are here to help all schools develop a Travel Plan."

"With this new workshop approach, we have tried to get the balance right - the resources and guidance helps schools put a

plan together, but, at the same time, recognises that all schools are different.

"Schools need to take ownership of the project in order to develop a plan that will work best for their particular location, that will encourage and enable people to make healthier choices for the journey to and from school."

"Participants in the workshops are able to take away with them plenty of information and ideas to get them started, and we are really pleased at the very positive feedback we have received."

■ A series of primary-school workshops are being held across the county in April and May. To inquire about attendance or about School Travel Plans generally, contact Melissa Horridge on **01772 530699** or write to Melissa at School Travel Plans, Transport Planning, Guild House, Cross Street, Preston PR1 8RD.



## Consumer safety experts' curtain call

THE job description of a Trading Standards officer doesn't usually include performing in the dramatic arts - but county council officers have been taking to the boards to impress the safety message on the county's older residents.

The 'Stay Safe' theatre show has been pulling in the crowds across the county to bring home the dangers of doorstep crime, and now the project has been shortlisted in the Community Involvement category of the prestigious Local Government Chronicle awards, to be presented in London in March.

Jim Potts, Lancashire County Council's Chief Trading Standards Officer said: "The shows have gone down extremely well with audiences and we've made them as enjoyable as we can, whilst getting across some very important messages about simple measures like using a door chain.

"Our message is 'do not do business on your doorstep' and we're doing all we can to help both individuals and communities tackle the problems."

Doorstep crime is a particular problem for the older community, with the typical victim statistically being an 81-year-old white woman living alone.

The Stay Safe show creates awareness of the problem so residents can better protect themselves and feel confident and secure in their own homes. Simple, positive doorstep guidance is given during the performance, which uses a mocked-up doorway and gentle humour - whilst always respecting the 'victim' - to get the message across.

Student volunteers originally helped out with the performances, but now Trading Standards staff have become seasoned actors in their own right. Rehearsals have to be squeezed in, usually early in the morning, so as not to interfere with their day jobs, and evening performances have also been organised.

Anyone wanting advice about doorstep crime issues in Lancashire can contact Trading Standards on 01772 532145, or for general enquiries contact Consumer Direct on 08454 040506.

## New partnership helping pupils to stay on track

A NEW partnership aimed at helping children and young people overcome problems at school has been launched in Preston.

Education chiefs hope that by working together, welfare agencies in the city can give a helping hand to pupils who might struggle with attendance or schoolwork because of behavioural difficulties or social disadvantage.

Courses in anger management, taking part in sports, coaching and mentoring and help with lessons all part of the programme, which is tailored to each pupil's needs.

The new team of key workers has been set up under the title of the Preston Partnership Project, to work one-to-one with pupils from the city's primary and secondary schools. The aim is to become involved at an early stage with pupils who may be on the road to exclusion or underachievement.

The early work of the project in a number of the city's schools has already met with success and the partnership has been praised by education chiefs and agencies involved in working with young people in the city.

Launching the project at Preston's North End football ground, Pat Jefferson, Lancashire County Council's Executive Director for Children and Young People, said: "I applaud these agencies for doing something creative in a context that is attractive to young people.

"We want them to have a good education and succeed and there is no reason why they can't have fun while they are doing so. But there is a serious intention behind this - there is nothing more important than seeing our young people heading for a good future. If we can give them a good start, they will go on learning for the rest of their lives."

One of the schools to take advantage of the new project since it began in September is Ashton Community Science College, where headteacher Chris Lickiss has seen an improvement in the performance of the six pupils aged 14-16 who have been referred to the programme.

"It has helped them become re-energised and motivated, and focused on learning," he said. "The programme makes education more real for individuals. We are excited that this city-wide project is offering many young people new opportunities to develop."

## Learning is personal says head



Ann Clark, headteacher

Shaftesbury House  
Short Stay School.

To passers by, mornings at Shaftesbury House Short Stay School would appear to be chaotic, with the road outside resembling a busy taxi rank. To those of us in the know, however, this is personalised learning in action!

Like all headteachers I have a school to run, but, unlike other headteachers, I can only make on-site provision for a third of my pupils. I have no way of knowing who my next pupil will be, which school they will have come from, their age or their sex.

The challenge is to ensure excluded pupils from Chorley and South Ribble high schools continue with their education whilst being

given the support needed to manage their behaviour, before returning them to mainstream schools, colleges or employment.

So, back to mornings. Following tutorials and Breakfast Club, the exodus begins.

Pupils head off in all directions. Some are transported to the Eric Wright Centre, Leyland, to follow an NVQ construction course, others to Fix It, Wigan, where they hope to achieve the ABC Diploma in Mechanics, or perhaps to Ormskirk for team building at MAPS challenge.

Four pupils will be at Walton-le-Dale High School where the head of food technology teaches them cooking skills. All have chosen these options to complement

their academic studies.

Inside school lessons are now underway. Pupils aged 11-14 are following the National Curriculum, whilst the 14-16 year olds are studying for a wide variety of GCSE exams including English, Mathematics and Science.

All pupils benefit from the input of other professionals such as South Lancashire Arts Partnership, a professional boxer and his trainer, a counsellor and, for a few weeks, a real life poet!

The pace is frenetic at times, but amazingly what works best for us here at Shaftesbury House, also fits in beautifully with the Government's drive towards personalised learning and meeting the outcomes of Every Child Matters.

## Alcohol website goes back to school

### TV personalities present prestigious prize to project

WHO better to help create a website about alcohol awareness for primary school pupils than young people themselves?

That was the thinking behind the new Lookout Alcohol website - and the result has just scooped second place at a prestigious national awards ceremony.

The interactive site has been produced by Lancashire County Council's Alcohol Project alongside the School and Community Partnership team and incorporates alcohol education, downloadable lesson plans for teachers, an information section for parents, and contacts for local services.

Children from Lea Community Primary School in Preston worked closely with

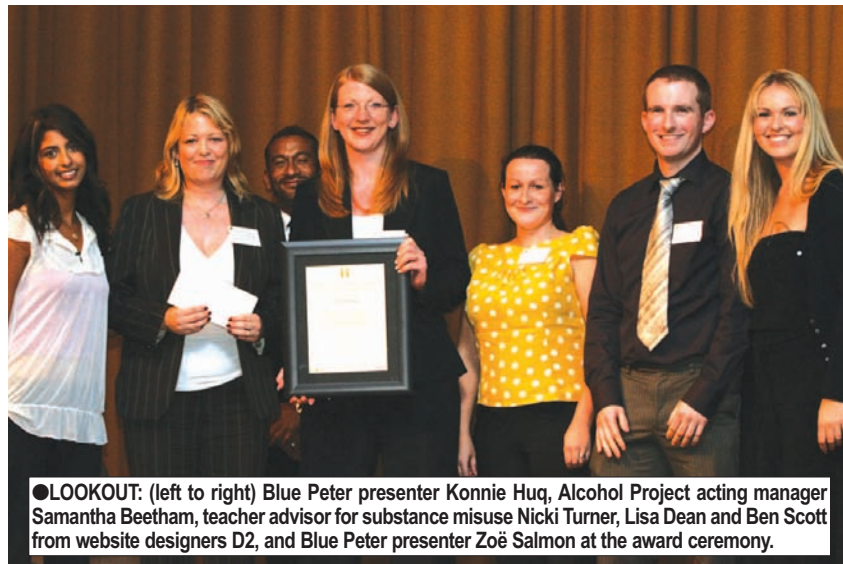
the project about the site and their suggestions - that it should be constructed like a game and fun to use - were incorporated.

One of the children involved commented: "What I like the best is the information that tells you what to be aware of and that it is not nice to drink alcohol when you are young."

Trevor Hart, head teacher at the school, said that the children's involvement in the site had been crucial in providing the child-friendly design.

He said: "A group of our Year Six children worked with staff from the Alcohol Project and they came up with the idea of making it into a game and filtered out whatever wouldn't be interesting to children their own age."

"If you don't give proper alcohol information to children while



●LOOKOUT: (left to right) Blue Peter presenter Konnie Huq, Alcohol Project acting manager Samantha Beetham, teacher advisor for substance misuse Nicki Turner, Lisa Dean and Ben Scott from website designers D2, and Blue Peter presenter Zoë Salmon at the award ceremony.

they're young, you lose them. It's a very valuable and important message and we were delighted to be so involved in the website."

The site was shortlisted in this year's Mentor UK Alcohol Misuse Prevention Awards Scheme and was named runner-up in the Young People's Involvement Category.

County Councillor Jean Battle, Cabinet member for community planning and partnerships, said: "I am very impressed with the qual-

ity of work that has gone into this site. The children's input was vital in helping us to create a website that is not only full of essential information but is also great fun.

"It's incredibly important to give children access to balanced, clear information about alcohol at an early age. Now parents and teachers have an excellent tool at their disposal to help them pass on the right messages."

Alcohol Project acting manager Samantha Beetham said that the

website is already a success, with visitors from as far afield as the USA, Australia and China.

She said: "We're now promoting the site in schools across the county so that all teachers know about it."

The website can be found at: [www.lookoutalcohol.co.uk](http://www.lookoutalcohol.co.uk)

The Alcohol Project is funded by Lancashire County Council, the Lancashire Drug Action Team and the Lancashire Children's Fund.

## Teens tie up LACES

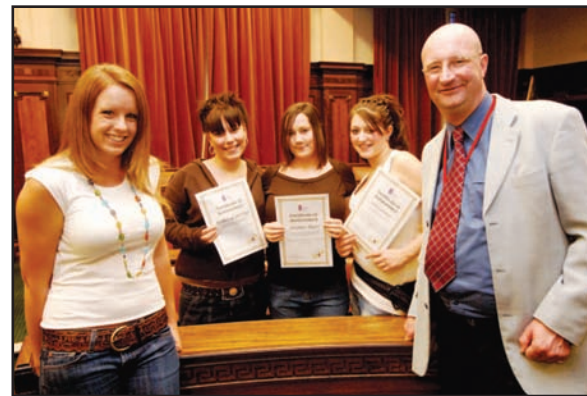
ROCK FM's Gemma Dee took a break from the airwaves to honour young people at the fourth annual LACES awards at County Hall.

The Looked After Children Employability Scheme (LACES), helps young people in care and care leavers across the county gain skills, experience and confidence to improve their job chances.

The breakfast show DJ presented 20 young people with awards following the completion of six-month training and work placements.

The scheme is managed by The Children's Society and funded by Lancashire County Council.

●LACES: DJ Gemma Dee, award winners and County Councillor Marcus Johnstone.





# LOOK LIVELY

## Jobs fairs take to the road

**TWO “jobs roadshows” are planned to tell people about vacancies, terms and conditions in the public sector.**

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 find out about training, learning and volunteering opportunities.

All organisations present are committed to giving everyone an equal chance of finding work.

## Take our advice and gain pounds

**A FLAT-screen TV, trips to Blackpool and treats for the grandchildren were the result when Kathleen Goggin asked for advice.**

The retired home-help thought she was not entitled to any benefits when she approached Lancashire County Council's welfare rights advisers.

But apprehension turned to delight when they calculated what she was due – and helped her claim it! – and weekly cheques started to arrive.

Kathleen, of Accrington, said: “I was always short of money – I just assumed that, as a working person for so many years, that there would not be any benefits for me.

“But it costs nothing to try and I’m now better off all the way round.

“A lot of people just assume they will not get anything, but they could be in for a pleasant surprise.”

County council staff are employed

to ensure people get what they are entitled to. The money is spent in the local economy, so the whole of Lancashire gains.

Many people are confused by the array of benefits and the council's welfare advisers help them through the maze. They can even help fill out the forms and will help over the phone or by visits to people's homes.

Kathleen added: “Someone came to my home and I have never looked back.

“I now have the freedom to buy the things I enjoy, whether that be a trip to Blackpool with friends or to treat a grandchild.

“I’ve paid tax all my life, so I deserve some help now I am no longer working.”

**For more details about benefits advice in your area, contact 01772 533504.**



● **FREE advice means Kathleen no longer struggles to pay bills.**

## Free soccer tickets boost safety

PUPILS at a Preston primary school were presented with free tickets to see their football heroes in recognition of their safety work.

Queens Drive Primary School pupils in Preston were presented with 50 pairs of tickets for the Preston North End versus Stoke City game.

The visit was organised by Lancashire County Council's road safety group, as part of this season's sponsorship of Chris Sedgwick.

As part of the package, the midfielder visited Queens Drive to present the tickets in honour of the school's commitment to road safety and ongoing dedication to the Passport to Safer Cycling scheme.

The safety scheme is available to all school children aged 10 or over and teaches safety when cycling, and the benefits of protective equipment such as helmets, lights and high-visibility clothing.

The road safety group provides training and educational resources to schools in Lancashire. For more information, visit [www.lancashire.gov.uk/roadsafety](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/roadsafety)

## Babies sign for bottom line

BABIES in Chorley are leading the way in recycling thanks to Lancashire County Council's “Bottom Line” incentive scheme.

Cousins Ebony, Georgia, Aimee and Lillie live in the Eaves Lane area of Chorley and have made the change from disposables to washable real nappies.

Sisters-in-law Samantha and Anne Newsham started using real nappies from the Bottom Line Real Nappy Scheme on the recommendation of their other sister-in-law, Nikki.

Anne said: “I swapped primari-

ly to save money but also because disposables nappies irritated my daughters' eczema. Since changing to real nappies, they haven't had a problem with their skin. The Bottom Line Scheme is great because it helps the environment and you can save £45 on your first purchase of nappies.”

Every day, the equivalent of 4.5 double-decker bus loads of nappies are thrown away and end up in landfill sites in Lancashire, where they may take up to 500 years to decompose.

The new ‘real’ nappies avail-

able from Bottom Line are as convenient and easy to use as disposables and come in a variety of trendy and colourful styles to suit every baby and every budget.

The current incentive scheme is open to parents of babies aged up to 18 months and mothers-to-be.

It also provides a great way for young parents to get together at “Nappuccino” coffee mornings.

To find out more about the Bottom Line, visit the website at [www.lancswasteinfo.com](http://www.lancswasteinfo.com), or call 0845 0500 957.

## Voice of



**Phil McEntee - celebrant registrar**

**an insight into what his new job entails and explains the range of services offered by Lancashire County Council's Registration Service.**

**It's more than just marrying people.**

**What does your job entail?**

Whenever I'm asked what I do for a living, my general answer is: “I marry people”. But to be honest I do a lot more than that. My formal job title is “celebrant”.

Basically I'm one of 78 registration staff in Lancashire who conduct non-religious civil ceremonies including marriages and civil partnerships. I also carry out non-statutory services such as baby-naming ceremonies, renewal of wedding vows, citizenship ceremonies and recently, the introduction of civil funerals.

**Why did you become a celebrant?**

After retiring from the police force I wanted a job that was interesting and involved meeting new people.

I saw the vacancy in the local paper. I like the fact that the job is casual with flexible hours and suits my circumstances.

**What is the appeal of your job?**

My job is all about people and

treating people fairly.

Whether it be a wedding or funeral, every ceremony I conduct is different because people are different. Some people want the minimum of fuss, which is fine.

Others want full ceremonies with readings, flowers, their own musicians and a video and photographer. I enjoy helping people celebrate the occasion, which is one of the most important and significant times of their lives.

**Where do you work?**

I'm based at Preston Register Office but I can be called to conduct ceremonies at any Lancashire Register Office or any one of our 94 approved premises for civil marriages and civil partnerships.

These include hotels, restaurants, town halls, stately homes and golf clubs. A colleague recently conducted a marriage ceremony in the changing rooms of Burnley Football Club!

**How has your job changed since you started?**

We offer services for people who do not necessarily want a religious ceremony.

I've only been a registrar for 18 months but since then there has been some major changes to our services due to recent changes to legislation. The Civil Partnership Act 2004, for example, now allows same-sex couples to obtain legal recognition of their relationship.

Since December 2005 we have carried out 213 civil partnerships.

Last week I conducted my first civil funeral. This is a non-statutory service, for people who do not want a religious ceremony, designed to meet the needs and wishes of each individual family.

**What is the most memorable ceremony you have conducted?**

Every ceremony is tailored to the wishes of the individuals. For example, I have married an 85-year-old gentleman who wanted to marry his partner of 30 years; and a young couple in casual wear who walked in to our Register Office one day wanting a legal wedding ceremony after they had carried out a Pagan hand-fasting ritual.

I have married a couple with over 200 guests in a top hotel; and a couple with just two witnesses in one of our offices. I also enjoy conducting civil weddings for Muslim and Hindu couples. The brides and bridesmaids are often dressed in beautiful and colourful outfits.

**What is the most popular music played at civil weddings?**

The music people choose is always interesting and can really make the ceremony memorable.

For couples walking in it would probably be to the classic Bridal Chorus by Wagner, the Wedding March or Pachelbel's Canon in D Minor which is very popular. I conducted one civil partnership for

a same-sex couple who chose “I'm coming out” by Diana Ross.

**When is your busiest time of the year?**

Getting married is still popular. It may be a cliché but often Valentine's Day can mean many couples decide to marry or renew their wedding vows.

The summer months are usually our busiest time and we are increasingly carrying out ceremonies in gazebos.

August has become the most popular wedding month over the last three years both in Lancashire and nationally. But I'm always busy.

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

I think you need to be comfortable and enjoy meeting new people from all walks of life and from different backgrounds.

Skills I gained from my time in the police has definitely helped me. I think a sense of humour helps to put people at ease.

My main aim is to be professional and make the day special for the people and families involved. People might not remember what you said but how you made them feel on the day.

**For more information about the services offered by the Lancashire Registration Service visit [www.lancashire.gov.uk](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk) or contact your local Register Office on 0845 053 0021.**

**VALENTINE'S day in February typically means the month of romance for many people.**

And for celebrant registrar Phil McEntee this often means a busy time, with many couples deciding to tie the knot or renew their wedding vows.

A former police officer of 30 years, Phil from Preston gives



# Past of slaves and waves

## New exhibition explores the history of shipwrecks and slave trading in and around Morecambe Bay

**THE darker side of Lancaster's seafaring history is being explored in two new exhibitions planned for the city's Maritime Museum on St George's Quay.**

Worse Things Happen at Sea, running from 21 April until the end of June, charts the history of disasters in Morecambe Bay from sixteenth-century shipwrecks to the 2004 cockling disaster in which at least 21 young Chinese people died.

"I think there's always a fascination with the untameable, dangerous side of the sea, and Morecambe Bay - although it's incredibly beautiful - is also a very lethal place," said Sarah Riddle, the museum's assistant keeper.

"It's incredible to think that in the 1830s, people still used to walk unguided across the sands from Ulverston as a short-cut to the farm labour hiring fairs in Lancaster, and more than 30 of them died."

The exhibition will feature the wreck of the Neptune in 1831, a source of local intrigue at the time because the pilot boat failed to guide her in. On her way from Ireland carrying grain, she foundered and sank off Glasson, and eight people died as a result.

In 1904, the Vanadis came to grief near Heysham and the remains of the wreck can still be seen at low tide in

Half Moon Bay near the port.

Working at the quayside Maritime Museum, Sarah is only too aware of the whims of Mother Nature. "We flood here about every five years," she said. "I haven't seen it yet, but I am sure I will."

Abolished? is the title of two exhibitions, running from 14 July to 31 October 2007, of Arts Council-funded displays by artists Lubaina Himid and Sue Flowers at the Judges' Lodgings and the Maritime Museum respectively.

A travelling exhibition called Campaigning Against Slavery is touring the county throughout 2007, arriving in the Maritime Museum café over Easter.

Created by Anti-Slavery International, it takes the audience on a visual journey from the time of the transatlantic slave trade to current forms of slavery such as human trafficking and - arguably - groups such as the Chinese cocklers.

Though it may seem difficult to believe now, Lancaster was once England's fourth largest port and played a key part in the slave trade.

"Lancaster was a river port, which could only accommodate smaller ships. These could travel up African rivers to quickly gather the captured Africans for transportation to the West Indies and North America, and then



● PLAIN sailing: Sarah Riddle from Lancaster's Maritime Museum examines historical records.

eventually return to the UK filled with sugar, rum, tobacco, mahogany and cotton," said Sarah. "It used to reduce the usual 18-month slave triangle route by about six months. A great many people in the town were indirectly involved in the slave trade; rope makers, carpenters, anyone connected with the shipping industry."

A trail around Lancaster points out the many grand houses once owned by wealthy slave traders, including the

quayside home and warehouse of Dodson Foster, an enigma of a man who was a practising Quaker and wrote poetry in a copper-plate hand, but had shares in two ships - the Balborough and the Bold - which carried hundreds of slaves in the 1770s.

For further details about events and exhibitions at the Maritime Museum, telephone 01524 382264 or visit the website: [www.lancashire.gov.uk/education/museums](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/education/museums)

## Specialist cop for crime and disorder

A NEW specialist police role has been established to improve community confidence in tackling crime and disorder issues that affect people with disabilities in Lancashire.

The Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) for Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment is a joint initiative between Lancashire Constabulary and Lancashire County Council.

Evidence suggests that some people with disabilities feel vulnerable in their own homes due to a perceived or real threat to their safety and well-being. This can result in disabled people feeling trapped and isolated in their own homes.

PC James Holland has been appointed to the new position and will be based at Lancashire Police headquarters in Hutton.

His primary role will involve raising awareness and identifying issues that affect disabled people and support services that meet the needs of disabled people.

Lancashire police have recently established a number of specialist PCSO posts, including

posts in respect of the black and ethnic minority community and people with HIV/AIDS.

PC James Holland said: "I am relishing the challenge of my new role. "We know that together we can make a difference to the lives of the many disabled people living in Lancashire."

County Councillor Chris Cheetham, Cabinet member for adult and community services, said: "Everyone has the right to live their lives free from abuse and crime. Some adults, including those with physical disabilities, are often more likely to experience abuse, intimidation and become victims of crime and disorder."

"The county council has a responsibility for keeping people safe. We are committed to working closely with the police and other organisations to try and protect everyone, including vulnerable people and those with a disability."

"This new specialist police role is an excellent initiative. It will help raise awareness, identify training and support needs and lead work across agencies and forums in ensuring the needs of disabled people are met."

## School visit marks start of Chinese Year of the Pig

### Chairman welcomes Chinese visitors to County Hall

LANCASHIRE County Council Chairman Terry Burns welcomed visitors from China's Guangdong province to celebrate Chinese New Year.

Pupils from the Guangdong Xin Hui Children's Palace played traditional Chinese music and presented the Chairman with a handpainted scroll marking their region's friendship links with Lancashire at a reception at County Hall.

The youngsters had earlier visited Penwortham Girls' High School and performed at Preston's Guild Hall.



● CHAIRMAN Terry Burns with (left to right) Yanzhao Liu, Kaimin Zheng and Zhuojue Shi.

## Students can be quids in

DO you need to sort out your student finances?

Help is on hand at Fleetwood library.

From 1 March, Lancashire County Council's Student Services team will be available at the library in North Albert Street

every Thursday afternoon, from 1pm to 6.30pm, to give advice on all aspects of student finance.

Students can receive advice on filling in their online application for higher education support, which can be completed - with hands-on support - in

the library's computer suite providing they have a valid library card.

To apply for a card, visit the library with a piece of ID which includes a signature.

Staff with knowledge of all areas of student finance, including mainte-

nance grants, loans, childcare, disabled students' allowances and students' personal eligibility to funding, will be available to provide one-to-one support.

For further information contact Lancashire Student Services on 01772 530430.

## Four star award

LANCASHIRE County Council has, yet again, achieved the top rating from the Audit Commission.

The council has maintained its 'four star' status - the highest possible classification - and been given an 'improving well' rating for its potential for future improvement.

Hazel Harding, Leader of the county council, said: "This is good news for our residents as it means that the excellent services we already provide are still on the up."

"Running a council is not all about winning awards, but this kind of endorsement from the Audit Commission proves that we are doing a very good job."

"The inspectors found that we have been performing particularly well in education, recycling and highway maintenance and that the outcomes for children and young people were above average. And, just as important, the value for money we are providing has been judged to be good."

Lancashire Locals - the pioneering partnerships between the county and district councils, which is unique in England, have also been singled out as an example of how different councils can work together effectively.

County Councillor Harding said: "We will use the Audit Commission's findings to continue improving our services. Achieving the top rating means we are amongst the best, but our residents will accept nothing but 100 per cent effort from us to keep getting better."

## Cabinet Question Time

SENIOR county decision-makers will be quizzed by the public at the next Cabinet Question Time event.

The session takes place in Chorley on Thursday 8 March at 7.30pm in St Mary's Parish Centre on West Street in Chorley.

County councillors present will include leader Hazel Harding, finance chief Anne Brown, adult and community services boss Chris Cheetham, children and young people boss Marcus Johnstone and schools supremo Alan Whittaker.

The evening will be hosted by BBC TV news reporter Dave Guest and forms part of the county council's drive to engage people in local issues.



# Your local library rocks!

## Library showcase for new bands

**PSST... have you heard about the new library initiative that has been shortlisted for a national award?**

But there's no need to whisper - the Get it Loud in Libraries project is all about breathing new life into libraries by using them as venues for, of all things, rock bands.

Get it Loud is a creative scheme arranged by Lancashire County Council staff at Lancaster Library to dispel young people's outdated perceptions of libraries and to bring accessible low-cost live music to the local community.

The project has been shortlisted in the Innovation section of the prestigious Local Government Chronicle awards, with the winners announced at a ceremony in London in March.

Staff behind the proj-

ect are delighted that their efforts are being recognised in this way.

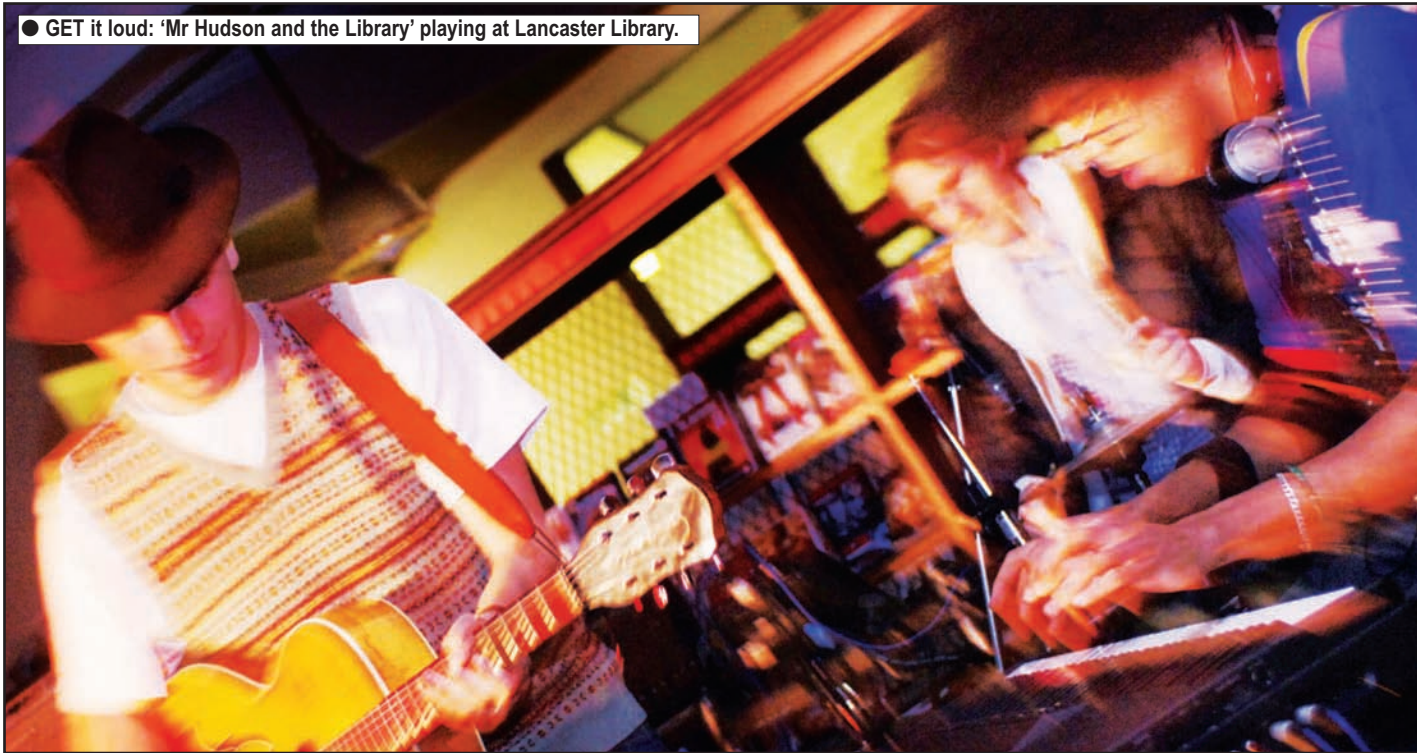
Stewart Parsons from Lancaster library said: "This has been an incredibly exciting project for us. We have been working hard to engage the community - especially teenagers and young adults - by offering a library experience that most of them would never dream of: a live rock band.

"There has been a great response to the eight gigs we've had so far and we've seen a definite increase in library use by younger people.

Last year our library lent out more CDs than any other of similar size, and we have had some very positive feedback."

Staff have risen to the challenge of transforming their environment from city library by day to rock venue by night, complete with PA sys-

● GET it loud: 'Mr Hudson and the Library' playing at Lancaster Library.



tem, sound engineer and stage. Bands appearing so far have included The Crimea, Bricolage, The Long Blondes and The Hot Puppies.

However, with the backing of local bands -

and on the Internet from acts like The Killers and Jarvis Cocker - the gigs have pulled in the crowds. The project has also had a great deal of support from major music labels including

Universal, Warner, Sony and Polydor Records.

One dad visited the library the day after the Mono Taxi concert to tell staff that his son had been so enthralled by his first experience of live

music that he'd asked for a guitar for Christmas.

For details of forthcoming events contact Lancaster library on 01524 580700 or visit: [www.myspace.com/getitloudinlibraries](http://www.myspace.com/getitloudinlibraries)

There are plans for a Get it Loud Up North Day across six northern city libraries, with the eventual aim of taking the programme forward nationally - and without a 'shh!' to be heard.

## Burnley technology switch

TWO new technology companies are set to fly after moving into Burnley's state-of-the-art business incubation units - and one has reported that sales are already up by nearly a quarter since the move.

County Councillor Terry Burns, the Chairman of Lancashire County Council, visited the Lancashire Digital Technology Centre (LDTc) to welcome the new firms to the advanced manufacturing centre of excellence for technology companies.

Terry said: "I am delighted to see these two businesses being added to the growing number who

are making use of LDTc's accommodation."

"As well as the on-site support and facilities, companies will be able to take advantage of each other's knowledge and expertise.

The two companies are Evertch Solutions Ltd, which designs, installs and configures computer network and server systems as well as a number of other services, and PAS Partnerships, which installs and maintains communications systems.

Stephen Dodgson, director of PAS, said he had seen sales rise by 22 per cent since the move to LDTc.

He said: "The location is excellent and the facilities are second to none. We have noticed that suppliers and others work with us differently when they see where we are based, plus we are already working with two other companies based on-site.

"We have just taken on our sixth member of staff and hope to recruit two more in the spring."

Evertch Solutions has been started by a group of experienced professional

IT engineers who formerly worked for the multinational company Azzurri MiTech a short distance away in Burnley.

Paul Leighton, company director of Evertch, described the facilities at LDTc as fantastic: "The image of the centre is superb, which of course helps with our company's image as we're starting up. We have three staff at the moment but we hope to increase that. New ideas are coming in all the time."

The LDTc is a joint venture between Lancashire County Developments Ltd, the county council's economic development company; Burnley College; and Burnley Borough Council.

The centre, on Bancroft Road on the Heasandford business park in Burnley, offers luxurious business incubation units with a café and courtyard, interactive conference facilities, landscaped gardens and full security.

Businesses wanting to know more about LDTc should contact the centre on 01282 872500.

## Pupils put their finger on the key to healthy eating

PUPILS at St Theresa's Catholic Primary School in Up Holland are leading an electronic revolution which is changing Lancashire's school dining rooms.

New scanners at the West Lancashire school mean that pupils can buy lunch using just a finger.

Thanks to the new system, losing lunch money is a thing of the past.

Pupils registered on the system also gain bonus points by eating healthily. At the end of the year prizes are up for grabs based on pupils' points.

The system can also be used to pick up on any allergies when pupils pay for their meal. If the school is aware of an allergy, staff will be warned and the pupil can be told to make another choice.

Nigel Finnermore, from Lancashire County Commercial Services - the county's school lunch provider, said: "Images of the fingerprint are turned



● HEALTHY: Pupils from St Theresa's with the new system

into an electronic digital signature, which is stored on the system. Parents can be reassured that no actual fingerprints are stored.

"There was a time when fingerprinting meant you'd been taken to the local police station, but banks, supermarkets, airports and colleges are all increasingly using similar systems."

Peter Atherton, Headteacher at the school, said:

"It's been a huge success with the children, because of the healthy points; they

are doing their best to win the trophy. Parents can keep track of what their children eat for lunch."

The software matches the pupil's fingerprint to a digital signature, based on a mathematical algorithm. On leaving the school, the pupil's details will be deleted from the system.

Fingerprinting is voluntary and parents may opt out of the system.

Information has been sent to parents about this new facility.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Road to a top career

TWO "Jobs roadshows" are planned to tell people about vacancies and conditions in the public sector.

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

Similar roadshows will be held on Tuesday 24 April at Pendle Pakistan Welfare Association, in 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.

### Job hunt cancelled

PLEASE note that the job opportunities event scheduled for Wednesday 14 March at the Municipal Hall in Colne, advertised in last month's Vision, has been cancelled.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Temporary bus runs in Lytham

ELDERLY residents in Lytham have gained a completely free bus service into town after their usual number seven bus was cancelled.

Bridgeworks meant the bus was cancelled - a major issue for residents in the Mythop Road area.

Lancashire County Council is now providing a shuttlebus between Lytham town centre to Ballam Road, Park View Road, Mythop Road and Saltcotes and back again.

The free bus will run until the bridges are repaired and the number seven bus resumes its usual route.

# Film office looking to Hollywood

**WITH James Bond filling cinemas again; how long before we see 007 wrestling with a villain in Rawtenstall, or in an aerial dogfight over the Rossendale hills?**

It's not as far-fetched as it sounds.

Locations in the Rossendale Valley are attracting film crews more than ever before and filming days in Lancashire have

risen by nearly 60 per cent in the past year, showing that the county is firmly on the location map for film-makers everywhere.

Lynda Banister, film liaison officer at Lancashire County Council's economic development company, Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL), attributes the rise to easy access, good locations, and the realisation that there are alternatives to London and Manchester.

Lynda said: "The Rossendale

valley offers some amazing views and scenery. It's clear to see why location managers might choose to film here, especially with the ease of access from the M66."

There were 251 filming days in Lancashire from January to October 2006, compared with 176 for the whole of 2005. Recent productions include *Kombat Opera*, an operatic pastiche of popular television shows, filmed in St Anne's, Blackpool and Blackburn; and *Instinct*, a highly

charged thriller, which saw Bacup's town library used as a police station.

Other productions recently filmed in the county include the BBC's *Comedy Map of Britain* and *Autumnwatch 2006*.

County Councillor Duncan Ruddick, who is also the Leader of Rossendale Borough Council and an LCDL board member, said: "I am delighted to see this increase in filming in the area, particularly in Rossendale."

"Those of us who live here already know that Lancashire is a special county, with an enormous variety of locations, both rural and urban, pastoral and industrial, and it is very gratifying to see this is recognised by film makers too. People are realising that the north west has a great deal to offer."

"Of course, with this huge increase in filming, the danger is that we'll all spend far too much time watching television to see our home county on the screen!"