



Parish and Town Council Newsletter

January 2024 (Winter)



A word from our Parish and Town Councils' Champion CC Paul Rigby....

Happy New Year! I hope that everyone had a happy festive break and managed to enjoy some time with loved ones over the Christmas period. Winter is well and truly upon us at the moment and I hope that everyone is keeping safe and well through the inclement weather. I would like to thank officers, volunteers and everyone who is helping to keep services running and our residents safe during the winter period.



As you may have heard, in November the Government announced the potential for an historic devolution deal for Lancashire which if approved would transfer new money and powers from central government to a newly created Combined County Authority. It would give local leaders extra powers to tackle key priorities such as better public transport, boosting economic prosperity and improving employment and skills as well as giving Lancashire a stronger voice on the regional and national stage. The County Council is keen to hear what people in Lancashire think about the devolution proposal, and there is more information about how to take part in the consultation in this newsletter.

I am pleased to say that we have received excellent feedback from the Parish and Town Council Conference which was held in November at County Hall. We had record numbers attending this year, mainly in person with some delegates attending via Teams. We've included a Frequently Asked Questions section in this newsletter to answer some of the questions that were asked at the conference that other parish and town council representatives might find useful. The annual Conference is part of our wider work to develop the relationship between LCC and parish and town councils in the County and next year we will be working on a refresh of the 'Working Better Together' Parish and Town Councils' Charter.

We live in challenging times and there are many pressures on all of us. Again this year the County Council is providing warm and welcome spaces in our libraries, and I know many parish and town councils also offer a warm and welcome space. There's more information in the newsletter about this and the wider package of winter wellbeing support available.

With all good wishes for a happy and healthy 2024.

Paul

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Lancashire Devolution Deal



In November 2023, the Government announced it would be willing to enter into a devolution deal with Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackpool Council.

The deal, if given final approval, will transfer new money and powers from central Government to a newly created Combined County Authority, allowing it to tackle key local priorities.

The deal would not require a change to the established democratic structures across the county or the need for an elected mayor. It will not require an extra charge on council tax.

The county council wants to hear what you think about the draft devolution proposal and is keen to get as many views as possible. Individual responses to the consultation from parish councillors and local residents are very welcome, as we appreciate that submitting a collective council response may be difficult in the timescale. Please forward this information on to your parish councillors and consider including the information on your website as soon as possible, as the consultation will run until **26 January 2024**.



Anyone who lives or works in Lancashire, as well as businesses and other interested parties can give their feedback. The consultation is your chance to learn about the proposal, understand how it could affect the region, and have your say.

Gathering your views and ideas is important to us, to make sure the deal meets the aspirations and priorities of the county.

During the consultation, you can find out more and share your views in a number of ways:

Online survey

[Consultation - Lancashire Devolution](#)

Public information sessions

Attend in-person sessions where you can receive information and engage directly with officials. These will be regularly updated on our website:

- Tuesday 9 January – 6pm to 7pm in Leyland Library, Lancastergate, Leyland, PR25 2EX
- Tuesday 9 January – 6pm to 7pm in Clitheroe Library, Church Street, Clitheroe, BB7 2DG
- Wednesday 10 January – 6pm to 7pm in Accrington Library, St James' Street, Accrington, BB5 1NQ
- Thursday 11 January – 6pm to 7pm in Fleetwood Library, North Albert Street, Fleetwood, FY7 6AJ
- Monday 15 January – 6pm to 7pm in Burnley Library, Grimshaw Street, Burnley, BB11 2BD
- Monday 15 January – 6pm to 7pm in Chorley Library, Union Street, Chorley, PR7 1EB
- Wednesday 17 January – 6pm to 7pm in Lancaster Central Library, Market Square, Lancaster, LA1 1HY
- Thursday 18 January – 6pm to 7pm in Garstang Library, Windsor Road, Garstang, PR3 1ED
- Thursday 18 January – 6pm to 7pm in Longridge Library, Berry Lane, Longridge, PR3 3JA
- Monday 22 January – 6pm to 7pm in Colne Library, Market Street, Colne, BB8 0AP
- Monday 22 January – 6pm to 7pm in Skelmersdale Library, Southway, Skelmersdale, WN8 6NL
- Wednesday 24 January – 6pm to 7pm in Fulwood Library, 294 Garstang Road, Fulwood, Preston, PR2 9RX
- Thursday 25 January – 6pm to 7pm in St Anne's Library, 254 Clifton Drive South, Lytham St Annes, FY8 1NR

A drop in event is also planned for the Rossendale area and further information will be published once this is arranged.



Paper surveys

If you are unable to access the consultation digitally please visit your local library to request a printed questionnaire, or call 0300 123 6782

Alternative versions

If you require an alternative version of the survey such as braille or another language, please email devolution@lancashire.gov.uk

To stay updated and informed about the Lancashire devolution proposal and the consultation, you can sign up for our newsletter and follow official social media channels related to the devolution deal.

Warm and Welcome Spaces



Residents can pop into their local library to enjoy a cuppa, a space to sit, free computers and Wi-Fi, charging points for digital equipment, events and activities and help from staff to find further information about what support is available.

Learn more about the Warm Spaces scheme and access the online directory of registered warm spaces on our website. <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/cost-of-living/warm-spaces/>

The measures are part of a wider package of winter wellbeing support, which includes the Household Support Fund, Preston Citizens Advice fuel support, the ongoing delivery of the Pensioner Benefits Uptake Campaign and a dedicated cost-of-living support hub. <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/cost-of-living/>

A Winter Wellbeing communications toolkit has also been produced that's available to district, town and parish councils and partner organisations to assist in maximising the uptake of these local and national initiatives. The toolkit includes a range of printable posters with an empty space to add opening hours etc.

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/public-health-campaigns/campaigns/winter-wellbeing-communications-toolkit/>



National Databank – Free SIM Cards



Lancashire libraries are helping tackle digital poverty as part of the National Databank scheme which provides free SIM cards from Virgin Media O2, Vodafone and Three.

The SIM cards have mobile data, minutes and text. This scheme works with Good Things Foundation's network of local community partners including our libraries. You can qualify for data from your local library if you are over 18, are from a low-income household, and:

- have no access or insufficient access to the internet at home
- have no or insufficient access to the internet when away from home
- cannot afford your existing monthly contract or top up

To benefit from the scheme, a recipient's device must either be unlocked or, if locked, be locked to O2, Vodafone or Three.

For more information, ask about the scheme at your [local library](#).

Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund

The winter round is now open - deadline for projects is 14 February 2024



**CROWDFUND
LANCASHIRE**

Do you have an idea for a project to improve the culture or sport offer in your local community? Organisations could get up to £20,000 from the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund to boost projects towards their funding target. **Parish and Town Councils can take part too, with up to £5,000 available.**

Individuals with ideas and businesses who want to benefit their community could get £1,500 towards their live crowdfunding campaigns.

[Crowdfund Lancashire](#) gives local communities and individuals a chance to create and support the projects which matter most to them. It will enable everyone to contribute towards their community - chipping in as little as £2 to help bring ideas to life.

We are working in partnership with Spacehive to create, fund and deliver your project idea. Spacehive are the UK's leading community crowdfunding platform.



Face-to-face events

If you would like to discuss your project face-to-face, the Crowdfund Lancashire team will be available on:

- Tuesday 9 January 5-6.30pm - Leyland Library
- Thursday 11 January 5-6.30pm - Fleetwood Library
- Monday 15 January 5-6.30pm - Chorley Library
- Tuesday 16 January 5-6.30pm - Haslingden Library
- Wednesday 17 January 5-6.30pm - Nelson Library
- Monday 22 January 5-6.30pm - Skelmersdale Library
- Wednesday 24 January 5-6.30pm - Lancaster Library
- Thursday 25 January 5-6.30pm - St Anne's Library

The next round of Crowdfund Lancashire will be open to new projects until 14 February 2024. This year we have introduced a simplified application method for individuals.

Check your project idea is eligible for a pledge from the fund - [Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund - eligibility criteria \(PDF\)](#)

See information on [current projects](#) and find out more about [Crowdfund Lancashire](#).

See [projects on spacehive which need your support](#).

If you would like to discuss your project idea, or need any assistance, please email our team at: lcsf@lancashire.gov.uk

Lancashire 4 Communities Funding Portal

The Communities Team are working with partners to identify and provide external funding opportunities for local people, community groups and organisations.



Potential grant funding opportunities can now be accessed on the new, free-to-use Lancashire County Council 4 Community online search tool. To register and find out more, please visit:

[Home | Lancashire County Council 4 Community \(idoxopen4community.co.uk\)](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/4community)

Help and advice on making a funding application is available on the Lancashire County Council 4Community online search tool. For additional information on local statistics to support your application visit [Lancashire Insight - Lancashire County Council](#)

If you require further support with funding bids, community projects or advice around VCFSE infrastructure, please contact the communities team:

01772 530650 communitiesteam@lancashire.gov.uk



Parish Conference FAQs

November saw the annual Lancashire Parish and Town Council Conference, held at County Hall.



The programme included presentations on services and developments of interest to local councils including: road surfacing technology and innovation; Lancashire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy; footpaths, bridleways and byways; planning and preparing for flooding in Lancashire; anti social behaviour and rural crime.

We've pulled together some of the questions asked with responses which may be of interest to everyone, plus links to further information on the Lancashire County Council website:

Q: How and who prioritises when a road needs repairing and the timings of the repair?

A: In March each year Cabinet consider the proposed Highways maintenance programme for the following financial year. Appendix B of the report states the criteria used to assess priority of each road class. The prioritisation is conducted by the Highways Asset Team who then pass a prioritised list of roads to be treated and the Countywide Projects Team will initially cost up and once approved then plan and undertake the works, taking into account time of year, type of treatment and the location. The Lancashire Road Works Bulletin includes details of when works have been planned: <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-travel/roads/roadworks-and-traffic-regulation-orders/lancashire-roadworks-bulletin/>

The capital programme once approved by Cabinet is published in March on the LCC Website: <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/strategies-policies-plans/roads-parking-and-travel/highway-asset-management-in-lancashire/programme-of-works/>

Defect repairs are assessed as they come in and prioritised and programmed on a daily basis based on the criteria set out in the Highway Safety Inspection Policy: [Highway safety inspection policy - Lancashire County Council](#)

Q: What is the timetable for gully cleaning and are details available on the LCC website?

A: Gully cleansing is carried out in 2 ways. Approximately 112,000 of the highest priority gullies are cleaned cyclically either annually (priority 1) or bi-annually (Priority 2). Whilst each cyclically cleaned gully will have a date by which it must be cleaned in order to ensure it is done within one or two years, the work is programmed flexibly to ensure the best use of the available resources and to manage any weather events or work around access issues.

Any gully can be cleansed reactively, and cleansing is carried out within 22 working days or 4 hours if an emergency.



Given the need to be flexible we are unable to provide programme dates on the Council website. On request we can confirm which gullies are cyclically cleaned and the date by which it will be cleaned.

Q: What is the resolution process for Public Rights of Way and how is the person who reported the issue updated?

A: When a defect or obstruction is reported to LCC the PROW team send an email to acknowledge the report (if the customer's email address is provided) which reflects the text of the report to ensure it is logged it correctly. It can take some time to resolve issues both due to the number of outstanding reports and the nature of the necessary works, which is a combination of practical work, mapping and legal.

Public rights of way generally run over private land so often we need to find landowners or other interested parties, research the legal line, width and structures (which may be different from that on the ground) and take into account factors such as ecology, ground conditions and land use when choosing a solution and sometimes we need to serve Notice or take other enforcement action for a seemingly simple matter. It may take some time, therefore, before we can email the customer with details of the resolution.

Q: What plans are in place to mitigate effects and impact of global warming in Lancashire?

A: LCC's Environment and Climate Strategy sets out action the authority is already taking and maps out further improvements we will make over the next three years.
<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/strategies-policies-plans/climate-change/>

Q: How do I raise concerns about speeding traffic and speed limits?

A: Please report concerns via the Lancashire Road safety Partnership website:
[Speed Concern Submission – Lancashire Road Safety Partnership \(lancsroadsafety.co.uk\)](https://lancsroadsafety.co.uk)

Q: What are LCC doing regarding dying ash trees on verges?

A: Please see [Ash die back - Lancashire County Council](#) for details of what the authority is doing.

Q: How do I apply for a Lancashire Warm Spaces Grant?

A: Two rounds of the grant scheme have been held in December and January with decisions on submitted applications made within a 14-day period. Future application dates will be advertised if any funding is remaining.
[Lancashire warm spaces grant scheme - Lancashire County Council](#)

Q: How are you going to get better IT speeds to rural areas?

A: Please see LCC website for more information about digital connectivity:
[Digital connectivity - Lancashire County Council](#)

Wishing everyone all the best for 2024 from the Partnerships Development Team!

parishcouncils@lancashire.gov.uk

