



Better Working Between Lancashire County Council and Parish and Town Councils

Parish & Town Council Charter 2024

Communication • Consultation • Contacts



Foreword

Parish and Town Councils are an important part of local government and have a vital role in acting on behalf of the communities they represent. Lancashire County Council is committed to working with Parish and Town Councils across the County to connect with local communities, understand their needs and respond to their priorities.

Whilst the County Council has a strategic role within Lancashire, it is recognised that improved mutual understanding, coordination and collaboration between all local councils will realise benefits for our all constituents.

In 2008 Lancashire County Council published the first Parish Council Charter. This was subsequently updated in 2013 and was further developed in partnership with representatives of Lancashire's Parish and Town Councils and published in February 2022, setting out a framework on how we can work better together.

Recognising that more needs to be done, this update seeks to provide further information and clarity on how to access Lancashire County Council's services.

Implementation of the Charter will be regularly monitored, with further updates and revisions brought to the annual Parish and Town Council Conference.

County Councillor Peter Buckley

Cabinet member for community and cultural services

October 2024



Introduction

Here at Lancashire County Council, we are helping you to make Lancashire the best place to live, work, visit and prosper.

We want Lancashire to be the county people choose to create a home, raise their children, develop a career and grow old in. We are committed to developing and celebrating our diverse communities, heritage and landscape to create a strong sense of place that we can all be proud of.

This is reflected in our Corporate Priorities of Delivering better services; Protecting our environment; Supporting economic growth; and Caring for the vulnerable. It is further underpinned by our values of being Supportive, Innovative, Respectful and Collaborative.

Working across multiple levels of local government in Lancashire

In Lancashire there are three levels of local government, namely the County Council, 12 District Councils and 214 Parished areas (represented by over 182 Parish Councils, 19 Town Councils and 1 Neighbourhood Council). Only half of Lancashire's residents are currently represented by a Parish or Town Council, with the remainder living in an Unparished area.

The Lancashire Combined County Authority (LCCA) is a proposed new model of local government for Lancashire and created through a devolution deal between the Government and the three upper tier councils of Lancashire, namely Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackpool Council. At the time of writing, details of the LCCA are still being worked through, but it is anticipated there will be no immediate impact to the role and responsibilities of Parish and Town Councils.

Generally, the County Council is responsible for the more strategic functions and services such as education and social care whereas the Districts Councils provide services such as household waste collection, environmental health and housing. Whilst some functions are shared between County and District, the County Council has the strategic role of achieving equitable, efficient and cost-effective distribution of services.

The Local Government Association has provided a useful overview of the different responsibilities between County and District Councils, and Unitary Councils such as our neighbours in Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen. This report can be accessed [here](#). The Government have also produced a guide to help understand how councils work, which can be viewed [here](#).

Parish and Town Councils in Lancashire are very diverse in their geographical locations, size, budget, aspirations and socio-demographic factors. In their role as democratically accountable bodies, they offer a means of directly shaping the important decisions which affect their locality and a means of decentralising the provision of certain services and of revitalising local communities.



Parish and Town Councils offer local knowledge and intelligence, links to community groups and other grass-roots organisations. Some Councils are also responsible for many local community assets, managing and maintaining sites such as allotments, playgrounds and community centres.

Further information on what Parish Councils do is provided by the [National Association of Local Councils \(NALC\)](#).

The map at Appendix A illustrates the complex structure of local government in Lancashire showing Parished and Unparished areas within each of the 12 Districts.

Please note that all references to Parish Councils in this document also refers to Town Councils and the Neighbourhood Council.



About this Charter

This Charter sets out the relationship between Lancashire County Council (LCC) and Parish Councils in Lancashire. We aim to work effectively, efficiently, economically and in better ways together for the benefit of local people, whilst recognising our respective responsibilities as autonomous democratically elected, statutory bodies.

The Charter is the result of experience and local consultation about establishing better ways of working and to confirm existing good practice. The document is not a service level agreement, nor does it specify key performance indicators or list target response times as these will vary from service to service and are reported elsewhere. It is intended as a high-level framework for better working between the County Council and Parish Councils across the geographic area of Lancashire within the LCC boundary.

Full details of how LCC operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure decision-making is efficient, transparent and accountable can be found in the Council's Constitution (www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/constitution). The Constitution also explains how members of the public can get involved in Council decision making and the arrangements the Council has put in place to ensure that decisions are scrutinised.

The relationship between individual Districts and the Parish Councils that are located within their geographical boundary do not form part of this Charter, nor does the relationship between the County Council and each of the 12 District Councils. That is the subject of separate District liaison meetings and Lancashire Leaders' meetings which are outside the scope of this document, though for reference, key contact details for various LCC services and each of the District Councils can be found in Appendix B.

The Charter focuses how we will work better together on three areas:

1. Improving Communication
2. Consulting With Others
3. Providing Access to Services



1. Improving communication

Effective communication is the basis for any successful working relationship.

Lancashire County Council will undertake to:

- Provide up to date information on the Parish Council website portal with links to the Council's [Constitution](#), [performance dashboard](#), [consultations](#), [public engagement process](#), [cabinet responsibilities](#), [committee structure](#) and how [compliments, comments or complaints](#) are handled.
- Maintain an up-to-date list of Parish Council Clerk contact details (contact name, email & phone).
- Share relevant information directly with Parish Councils in a timely way by email on appropriate issues (eg. [Public Rights of Way](#)).
- Nominate a County Councillor to serve as the Parish Champion, and an appointed County Council Cabinet Member. These elected members will lead on ways to sustain and improve effective partnership working and will have officer support from members of the Partnerships Development Team.
- Produce and issue two newsletters per year for Parish Councils under the guidance of the Parish Champion.
- Provide clear details for Parish Councils on how to report specific issues and service requests. (eg. [Love Clean Streets](#) for highways issues) and routes for escalation (e.g. highwaysdistrictlead@lancashire.gov.uk and parishcouncils@lancashire.gov.uk)
- Respond to service requests and queries promptly in line with customer service standards as outlined in the corporate [strategies policies and plans](#), providing acknowledgement and regular updates as required. (eg. [response times for pothole repairs](#)).
- Encourage and support County Councillors to work closely with their local Parish Council(s) and to be a link between the County Council and local council. This will include an appropriate section during the induction process for newly appointed County Councillors.
- Provide officer commitment to attending local area committee meetings, organised by the Lancashire Association of Local Councils (LALC) area committee coordinator.
- Operate a dedicated email address (parishcouncils@lancashire.gov.uk) which will be monitored by officers, for queries about general matters that Parish Councils may wish to raise, such as co-ordinating responses to Neighbourhood Plan consultations, information sharing and health and wellbeing messages. Emails sent to this dedicated email address will receive a response within 5 working days.
- Host an annual conference which will address themes determined collaboratively with LALC representatives and LCC. This will be attended by the Cabinet member and Parish Champion and senior officers, who will offer the opportunity for direct discussions with representatives from local councils.



- Offer signposting to grant funding opportunities, including the Lancashire Cultural and Sport Fund ([Crowdfund Lancashire](#)) and the communities grant portal which can be accessed at [Lancashire County Council 4 Community](#).
- Hold all contact details in compliance with all relevant legislation and corporate policies (e.g. Information Governance policy, GDPR and Data Protection) as set out in the [LCC corporate privacy notice](#).

Parish Councils will undertake to:

- Provide up-to-date contact details (contact name, corporate email & phone and appropriate GDPR authorisation for the principal contact (usually the Clerk).
- Encourage Clerks to have access to a computer and dedicated email account attached to an appropriate domain (e.g. clerk@xxxparishcouncil.gov.uk in line with audit requirements), in order to effectively communicate with Lancashire County Council.
- Disseminate information and updates sent to the main contact to Parish Council Councillors and across the local community as appropriate.
- Use a variety of appropriate methods to communicate and consult with their communities.
- Consider supporting the Lancashire Association of Local Councils (LALC) (www.lalc.org.uk), the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) (www.slcc.co.uk) and other agreed Parish Council representative bodies as a knowledgeable point of reference.
- Act as a conduit between the local community and LCC enabling issues to be raised and responded to quickly.
- Report specific local issues to the relevant department(s) at LCC in a timely manner using the contact details list in Appendix B.
- Use the dedicated email address (parishcouncils@lancashire.gov.uk) for queries about general matters that Parish Councils may wish to raise.
- Keep their local County Councillor(s) informed about key Parish Council issues and decisions and invite them to meetings.
- Provide their local County Councillor(s) with agendas and minutes of meetings (if requested).



2. Consulting with others

It is essential that Lancashire County Council and Parish Councils work together when making decisions to shape services and policies that affect our communities.

Lancashire County Council will undertake to:

- Engage with Parish Councils on all issues that are likely to affect their area, where there is an opportunity to influence decisions.
- Consult with Parish Councils on issues and services that impact their residents and allowing sufficient time for an effective response. Whenever possible give at least six weeks to respond to formal consultations or set deadlines that consider parish meeting cycles.
- Make sure service managers know of the need to consult Parish Councils and understand the importance of considering parish meeting cycles and providing timely feedback.
- Give appropriate weighting to Parish Councils feedback and opinions, understanding that they hold detailed local knowledge.
- Provide feedback to Parish Councils on the outcomes of consultation in which they have been invited to participate.
- Measure the quality of feedback provided to Parish Councils, via satisfaction ratings, through the Parish Council dedicated inbox.
- Work with the Lancashire Association of Local Councils (LALC) (www.lalc.org.uk) and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) (www.slcc.co.uk) as representative organisations.

Parish Councils will undertake to:

- Take responsibility for engaging with their local community on matters relevant to their area, involving as many people in the local community wherever possible in consultation responses.
- Wherever possible respond within consultation deadlines set by LCC unless otherwise agreed.
- Recognise that the County Council frequently has limitations and constraints when working on consultations, most notably timescales that cannot be influenced.
- Consult the County Council and other Parish Councils about decisions which affect those councils.
- Work with local District Councillor(s) and Councils where appropriate.
- Provide local knowledge of issues/concerns of the communities they serve.
- Recognise the strategic role of LCC in tackling issues that look beyond individual Parish Council boundaries.



3. Providing access to services

Parish Councils are close to their communities and are best placed to understand their needs. Many are able to provide and operate some services and this can be developed through closer working. This will vary between Parish Councils depending on capability, size, budget and demography but could include services such as public rights of way maintenance and Parish lengthsman services.

Lancashire County Council will undertake to:

- Recognise the key role of Parish Councils in representing local communities and understanding and responding to local needs.
- Commit to having honest and transparent explorative discussions, with Parish Councils who are interested in operating services.
- Provide links to relevant services, where there is a scope for parishes to play a greater role.
- Work with LALC to develop a toolkit and training for newly elected Parish Councillors.
- Where appropriate, work with Parish Councils on options for delegating services to individual local councils.
- Develop closer working relationships with District Councils at both an Officer and Councillor level and via the Lancashire Leaders' meetings.
- Work with Parish Councils to support the health and wellbeing of their communities through the delivery of programmes such as warm and welcome spaces, health promotion, road safety, information sharing and environmental improvement schemes.
- Provide accessible summaries of cabinet reports and decisions, where there is a direct impact on Parish Council services and budgets.

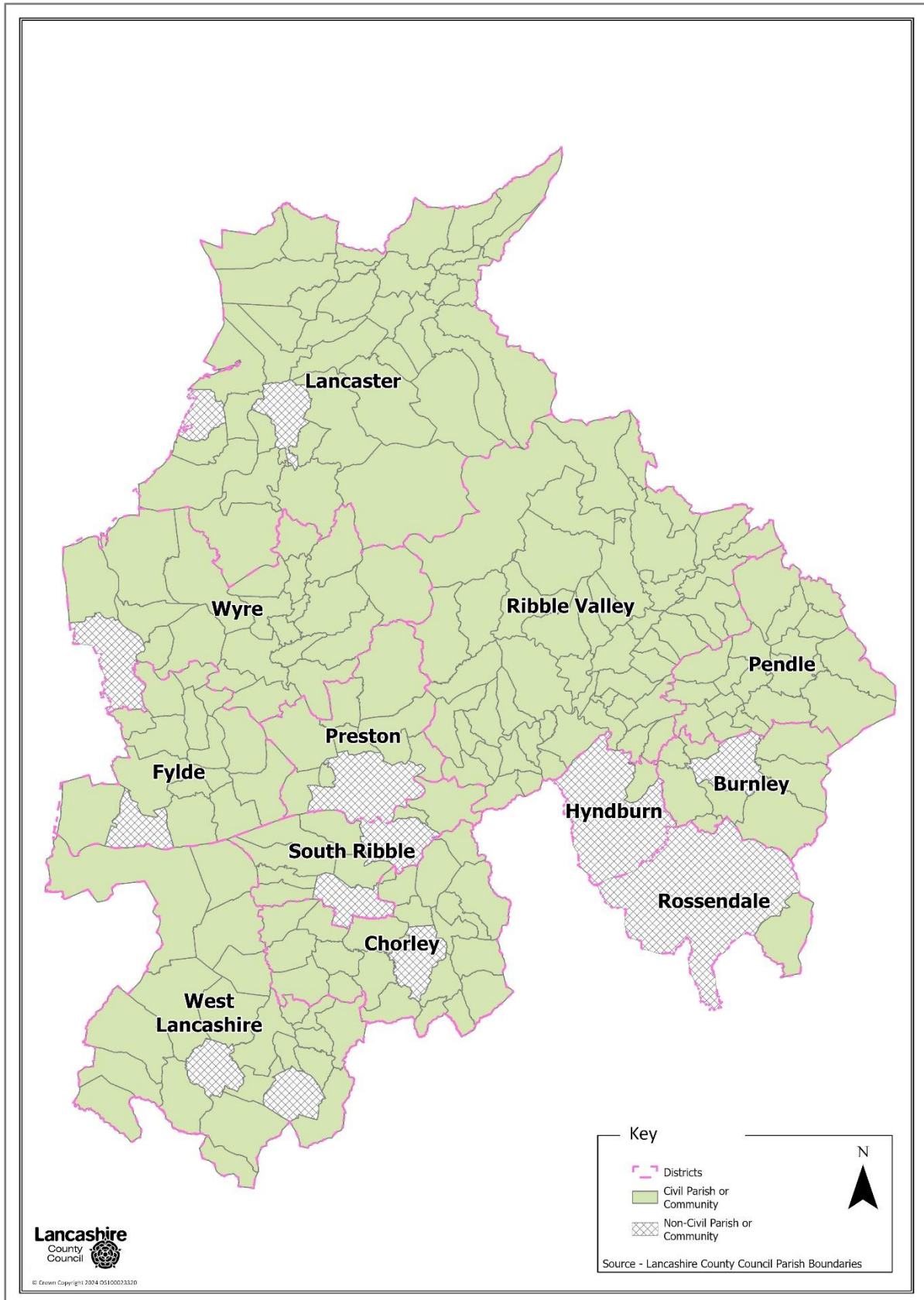
Parish Councils will undertake to:

- Work with LCC on options for delivering delegated services where appropriate.
- Identify training opportunities and needs regarding County Council services.
- Support grant funded projects to deliver improved services to their communities.
- Encourage cross-Parish Council working and collaboration.
- Encourage new clerks and councillors to access training which has been designed to support them in their roles, through member bodies.
- Promote and encourage their communities to support public health messages and environmental improvement initiatives.



Appendix A

Parished and Unparished areas in Lancashire County Council area.



How to contact LCC

Contact Us webpage:

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/get-involved/contact/>

Parish and Town Council webpage:

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/parish-and-town-councils/>

List of County Councillors:

<https://council.lancashire.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx>

Highways matters:

Love Clean Streets: <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-travel/report-it/>

Parish and Town Council priority inbox: highwaysdistrictlead@lancashire.gov.uk

Send a compliment or comment or make a complaint to the Council:

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/get-involved/compliments-comments-complaints/>

Parish and Town Council general enquiries email:

parishcouncils@lancashire.gov.uk

Useful LCC Phone Numbers

Customer Services / General Enquiries (Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm):

Email enquiries@lancashire.gov.uk

Telephone 0300 123 6701 Fax 01772 536 199

Lancashire County Council, PO Box 78 County Hall, Fishergate, Preston, PR1 8XJ

Out of hours emergency contact details:

Social care 0300 123 6722

Highways 0300 123 6780

Police (non-emergency) 101

Libraries:

Library service automated renewal line 0300 123 6704

Libraries 0300 123 6703

Schools:

School admissions and appeals 0300 123 6707

School transport 0300 123 6738



Highways, NoWcard and Blue Badges:

Highways	0300 123 6780
NoWcard	0300 123 6737
Blue Badges	0300 123 6736

Waste and Recycling:

Waste helpline	0300 123 6781
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Births, deaths and marriages:

Registrars and certification service	0300 123 6705
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Social care:

Social care	0300 123 6720 (8am-8pm)
Safeguarding adults	0300 123 6721
SEND information and advice	0300 123 6706
SMS text	07860 031294

Partner Organisations Emergency Phone Numbers**Gas leaks and major electricity hazards (e.g. overhead cables, pylons)**

Gas: National Grid UK & Cadent	0800 111 999
Electricity: National Grid UK	0800 40 40 90

Personal gas & electricity issues (e.g. interruption of supply):

Contact your own supplier/s (British Gas, Electricity North West etc)	
Powercut reporting	105

Water (e.g. bursts/leaks, flooding involving sewers, loss of supply):

United Utilities plc	0345 672 3723
Yorkshire Water plc	0345 124 2424

Environment Agency (e.g. pollution, flooding involving rivers/sea):

Working hours (Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm)	03708 506506
Out of hours	101 for police support & EA attendance

Member Bodies**Lancashire Association of Local Councils**

www.lalc.org.uk	01772 750900 or 07950 281111
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Society of Local Council Clerks

www.slcc.co.uk	lancashire@slcc.co.uk
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District Council Contact Details

Burnley Borough Council	01282 425011	www.burnley.gov.uk
Chorley Borough Council	01257 515151	www.chorley.gov.uk
Fylde Borough Council	01253 658658	www.fylde.gov.uk
Hyndburn Borough Council	01254 388111	www.hyndburnbc.gov.uk
Lancaster City Council	01524 582000	www.lancaster.gov.uk
Pendle Borough Council	01282 661661	www.pendle.gov.uk
Preston City Council	01772 906900	www.preston.gov.uk
Ribble Valley Borough Council	01200 425111	www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Rossendale Borough Council	01706 217777	www.rossendale.gov.uk
South Ribble Borough Council	01772 625625	www.southribble.gov.uk
West Lancs Borough Council	01695 577177	www.westlancs.gov.uk
Wyre Borough Council	01253 891000	www.wyre.gov.uk

