



# Better Working Between Lancashire County Council and Parish and Town Councils

**Parish & Town Council Charter 2022-2024**

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. In turn, the local councils recognise the strategic role of Lancashire County Council and the equitable distribution of services.

This revised Charter has been developed in partnership with representatives of Parish and Town Councils in Lancashire and sets out how we will work together. I very much welcome this revised Charter and look forward to continuing to work closely with our local Councils over the coming period.

### **County Councillor Peter Buckley**

Cabinet member for community and cultural services

February 2022

## Introduction

We aim for Lancashire to be 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 the three levels of local government in Lancashire

In Lancashire there are three levels of local government, namely the County Council, 12 District Councils and 212 Parished areas (represented by over 180 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.

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, Parish and Town Councils offer a means of directly shaping the important decisions which affect their locality. They offer 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.

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.

## About this Charter

This Charter sets out the relationship between Lancashire County Council and Parish and Town Councils in Lancashire. We aim to work effectively 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 the severity of the issue raised. It is intended as a high-level framework for better working between Lancashire County Council and the Parish and Town Councils across Lancashire.

The relationship between individual Districts and the Parish and Town 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.

## How we will work better together:

### 1. Improving communication

Effective communication is the basis for any successful working relationship.

Lancashire County Council will:

- Nominate a County Councillor to serve as Parish and Town Council 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.
- Maintain an up-to-date list of Parish & Town Council Clerk contact details (contact name, email, phone & postal address).
- Provide clear details for Parish and Town Councils on how to report specific issues and service requests. (eg. [Report It](#) for highways issues).
- Respond to service requests and queries promptly in line with agreed corporate customer service standards, 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 / Town Council(s) and to be a link between the County Council and local council.
- Operate a dedicated email address ([parishcouncils@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:parishcouncils@lancashire.gov.uk)) which will be monitored by officers, for queries about general matters that Parish and Town Councils may wish to raise, such as co-ordinating responses to Neighbourhood Plan consultations.



- Share relevant information directly with Parish and Town councils in a timely way by email on appropriate issues (eg. [Public Rights of Way](#)).
- Produce and issue two newsletters per year for Parish and Town Councils under the guidance of the Parish and Town Council Champion.
- Provide up to date communications on corporate and community matters via the Lancashire County Council Parish and Town Council website pages and via social media channels.
- Host an annual conference which will address themes determined collaboratively with Parish and Town Council representatives and Lancashire County Council. This will be attended by the Cabinet member and Parish and Town Council Champion and senior officers, who will offer the opportunity for direct discussions with representatives from local councils.
- Offer signposting to grant funding opportunities and other relevant service offers e.g. utility companies. This includes supporting access to the communities grant portal which can be accessed at [Lancashire County Council 4 Community](#).
- Make best use of the information technology available to promote quick and efficient communication.
- 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 & Town Councils will:

- Provide up-to-date contact details (contact name, corporate email, phone & postal address) and appropriate GDPR authorisation for the principal contact (usually the Clerk).
- Encourage Clerks to have access to a computer and dedicated email account.
- Assist and encourage Parish Councillors to have access to and use of electronic communication.
- Make best use of the available information technology to deliver communication with Lancashire County Council.
- Disseminate information and updates sent to the main contact to Parish and Town Councillors and across the local community as appropriate.
- Use a variety of appropriate methods to communicate and consult with their communities.
- Act as a conduit between the local community and Lancashire County Council enabling issues to be raised and responded to quickly.
- Report specific local issues to the relevant department(s) at Lancashire County Council in a timely manner using the contact details list in Appendix B.
- Use the dedicated email address ([parishcouncils@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:parishcouncils@lancashire.gov.uk)) for queries about general matters that Parish and Town Councils may wish to raise.

- Keep their local County Councillor(s) informed about key parish/town issues and decisions and invite them to meetings.
- Provide their local County Councillor(s) with agendas and minutes of meetings (if requested).
- Use and locally promote the County Council's Customer Service Centre and website to resolve 'day-to-day' issues.

## 2. Consulting with others

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

Lancashire County Council will:

- Engage with Parish and Town Councils on all issues that are likely to affect their area.
- Consult with Parish and Town Councils on issues and services that impact their residents and allowing sufficient time for an effective response.
- Work with the Lancashire Association of Local Councils ([www.lalc.org.uk](http://www.lalc.org.uk)) and the Society of Local Council Clerks ([www.slcc.co.uk](http://www.slcc.co.uk)) as representative organisations.
- Provide feedback to Parish and Town Councils on the outcomes of consultation in which they have been invited to participate.
- Whenever possible give at least six weeks to respond to formal consultations or set deadlines that consider parish meeting cycles.
- Make sure our service managers know of the need to consult Parish and Town Councils.

Parish & Town Councils will:

- 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 Lancashire County Council 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 and Town 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 Lancashire County Council in tackling issues that look beyond individual Parish and Town Council boundaries.

### **3. Providing access to services**

Parish and Town 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 and Town 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:

- Recognise the key role of Parish and Town Councils in representing local communities and understanding and responding to local needs.
- Work with Lancashire Association of Local Councils to develop a toolkit and training for newly elected Parish and Town Councillors.
- Where appropriate, work with Parish and Town 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 and Town Councils to support the health and wellbeing of their communities through health promotion, information sharing and environmental improvement schemes.

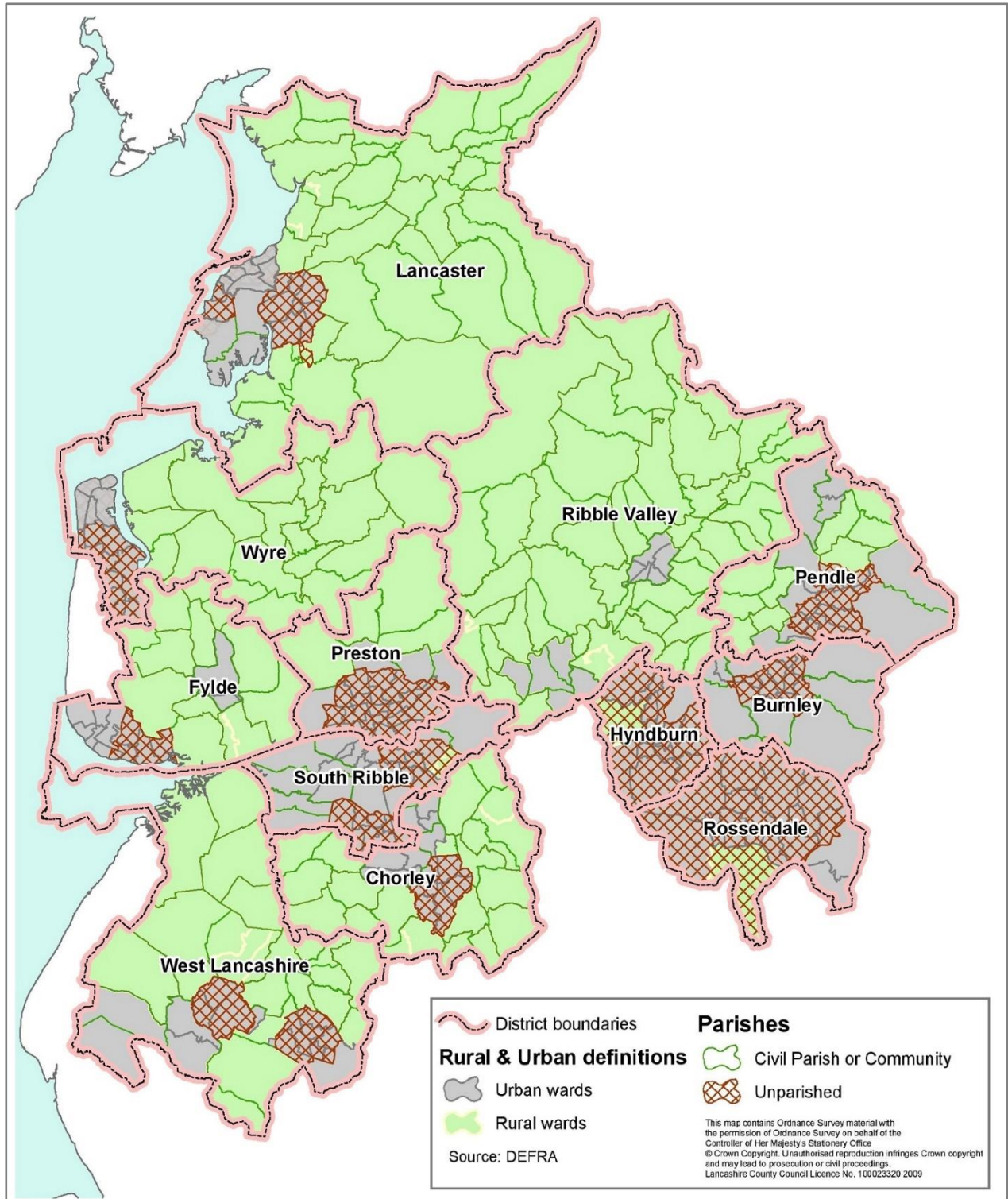
Parish & Town Councils will:

- Work with Lancashire County Council 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 possibly via local area committees.
- Promote and encourage their communities to support public health messages and environmental improvement initiatives.

### **4. Implementation, monitoring and review**

Implementation of the Charter will be regularly monitored, and updates provided at the annual Parish and Town Council Conference. The Charter will be reviewed in 2024.

**Parished and Unparished areas and Urban & Rural definitions**





## **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/>

### **Highways matters:**

Report IT webpage: <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-travel/report-it/>

Team mailbox: [highwaysdistrictlead@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto: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/>

### **List of County Councillors:**

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

### **Parish and Town Council general enquiries email:**

[parishcouncils@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:parishcouncils@lancashire.gov.uk)

## **Useful LCC Phone Numbers**

### **General Enquiries (Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm):**

Email [enquiries@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto: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 101 (For LCC highways and police non-emergency calls)

### **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

**Births, deaths and marriages:**

Registrars and certification service 0300 123 6705

**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

**District Council Contact Details**

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