



Bus services under threat

A number of bus services operating in West Lancashire could be withdrawn from 1st April 2016 following the decision that the County Council has had to make to withdraw subsidies to bus operators for routes that are no longer commercially viable.

The County Council say that they face an unprecedented financial challenge and over the next five years to 2020/21 the council needs to make savings of £262m on top of those agreed within previous budgets. This extremely difficult financial picture is the result of continued cuts in funding by Government, rising costs and rising demand for key services.

Whilst many of the bus service contracts are not commercially viable, bus operators are considering whether they could provide some service level in the area, without any level of subsidy. Where this is not possible bus operators will deregister the service with the Traffic Commissioner from 2 April 2016.

The Council is conducting a survey focusing on the impacts of this decision and what mitigation may be taken. To complete the survey, please follow this link: <https://www.snapsurveys.com/wh/s.asp?k=145139791778>

A number of alternate possibilities have been discussed at the One West Lancs Transport Thematic Group meetings, including the expansion of the Community Car Scheme in West Lancs which is currently been delivered by Dial-a-Ride. The County Council have also identified the possibility of providing local voluntary groups / Parish Councils etc., with their own mini buses for them to run their own local services providing that they can come up with a viable business plan to deliver a self-financing service.

One West Lancs is a partnership of the local voluntary, public and business sectors which aims to improve the quality of life for everyone in West Lancashire

This One West Lancs quarterly e-newsletter is sent to over 500 people. It is circulated to all One West Lancs Forum members, the One West Lancs Board, our elected representatives as well as members of the wider VCFS community.

If you no longer wish to receive the One West Lancs e-newsletter, please let us know and we will take you off the circulation list.

In This Issue

- Rural funding
- Business loans
- Pop-up Christmas
- Farm flooding



Funding for rural areas

The Lancashire LEADER programme is now officially open for business - with the aim of creating jobs and helping businesses grow, which will then benefit the rural economy.

The LEADER scheme is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and is part funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). The first round of funding is aimed at **Enterprises** and **Farming** businesses and the focus is very much on job creation and growth of the business. Full details of the eligibility criteria can be found on the [Rural Development Fund website](#).

Annual Local Action Group Meeting

The annual meeting for the three Lancashire Local Action Groups will take place from 12-2pm on **Wednesday 16th March 2016**. **The event is open to anyone who lives, works or has an interest in the rural areas of Lancashire.**

The meeting will provide an update on the progress of LEADER so far, as well as providing information regarding future activity. Lunch and refreshments will be provided and you will have an opportunity to network with other members of the LAG.

The event will be held at the NFU offices in Skelmersdale. Please note that places are limited. If you would like to reserve a place please [book here](#).

www.onewestlancs.org

Business start up loans

The Start Up Loans Team has announced that Start Up Loans are now available to anyone who has a business less than 3 years old. The money is available to lend now and they are able to turn applications around quickly.

- Start Up Loans are available for up to £25,000 per person
- Repayment periods of up to 60 months
- Interest rate 6% fixed for the term of the loan
- Most business types are eligible and the loan can be for a wide range of business purposes
- The package includes free business mentoring and access to a range of other offers

The team may also be able to help successful business owners who are looking for finance and can't get help from their bank.

For more information, email SULP@lancashirecommunityfinance.co.uk or ring Matthew Rimmer at the Start Up Loans Team on 01772 556877.



Pop-up Christmas party challenge

A Managing Director of a Skelmersdale business issued a Christmas challenge to his staff team. Before going out for their Christmas meal that evening, could they use the day to organise a free Christmas meal for 50 local charity workers and volunteers?

The team rose to the challenge magnificently and delivered the feast – on time and to budget. From being issued the challenge at 8am that morning, the team worked non-stop to source, cook and serve a four course Christmas dinner for over 50, organise entertainment, raffle, quiz, decorations, presents, and even a Father Christmas!

Phil Lynas, Managing Director of All About Food said: 'We organised the event to highlight and celebrate all the good work done by local charities in West Lancs. I'm proud of my team who worked so hard to deliver such a wonderful event - overall it was simply one of the best days I have experienced in 17 years of All About Food!'

Greg Mitten of West Lancs CVS, which organised attendance of the local charities to the event said: 'This was a fantastic event and a worthy celebration of all the hard work done by the voluntary sector across West Lancs. It's brilliant to see a local business getting involved in the community in this way!'

More information:
www.allaboutfoodltd.com





Community farm flooded

West Lancs suffered much in the recent floods, and one place dramatically and disastrously affected was the Organic Veg Club Community Farm near Rufford.

As reported in the One West Lancs newsletter in December 2014, the Organic Veg Club was set up as a new and innovative food growing project to get local people pooling resources to grow fruit and vegetables. 2015 was their first full year of growing and was highly successful. However on 28th December, Neil Hickson wrote on their blog: *'The last two days have had a devastating effect on Organic Veg Club. The collapse of the Ellerbrook river bank filled our farm with 5 feet of water.'*

Two years ago we started Organic Veg Club, a community farm based in between Rufford and Burscough. During the flood, 2 years hard work from Members of Organic Veg Club were washed away. We lost most of our chickens and ducks, three beehives and all our remaining crops were washed away. We had planted over 1500 trees on site with more to go in this winter. All our tools and equipment are in an inaccessible shipping container that is sitting in 4 feet of water.

Yesterday we rowed a dingy into the barn we were in the process of finishing off last week as it had five feet of water in it. However there was a small amount of good news when four of us saved the 13 chickens that had managed to cling onto life on top of their floating coop and other floating debris overnight.



'In other good news, we found one of our missing beehives on the riverbank with bees flying in and out of it. It seems, because the hive had been 'strapped up' for the winter, it all stayed in one piece and floated on its back which stopped it filling with water and drowning the bees.



Neil: 'The flood disaster on Boxing Day and the stress that it caused is slowly being eclipsed by the amazing groundswell of goodwill messages and creative thoughts and ideas to get Organic Veg Club back on its feet. Jane and I have been overwhelmed with the wonderful messages we have received.'

Community is a wonderful thing and the people that have come together to achieve what we have so far have now become more important to me than the project itself. I have learned that the two go hand in hand. The pleasure and satisfaction I get from achievements and successes we have made are multiplied when they are shared with others. This has been the great lesson I have learned from this project.'

With the breach in the river bank now repaired, the group is determined to carry on.

It is formulating a plan of action for this year which starts with an event on **Wed 24th Feb** at The Grove, Burscough, L40 0RZ. The drop-in event will run 3pm-8:30pm and includes an exhibition and a series of presentations, followed by the AGM.

The Organic Veg Club would like as many people as possible to come and find out more about Burscough Community Farm.

www.organicvegclub.co.uk

Funding help for flooded farms

The Farming Recovery Fund initially opened for applications for flood-affected farmers in Cumbria, Northumberland and parts of Lancashire on 18th December.

Now with other areas severely affected, as shown by Organic Veg Club's experience, Defra has decided to extend the fund. Farmers in Lancashire and Yorkshire impacted by Storm Eva, which hit over Christmas and Boxing Day (25 and 26 December) are now eligible to be able to apply. For more information please see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/farming-recovery-fund-extended-to-all-parts-of-lancashire-and-yorkshire>

The deadline for applications has now been extended from 18 March 2016 to 1 April 2016 to provide further time for affected farmers to apply. Details of how to apply are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-the-farming-recovery-fund-frf>

Farmers whose land has been flooded and are experiencing extreme hardship are advised to contact the RPA on **03000 200 301** as soon as possible and report their circumstances, so that they can access targeted support.

Contact

One West Lancs

Phone us on
01695-733737

Email:
martint@wlcvs.org

C/o West Lancs CVS
Certacs House
10-12 Westgate
Skelmersdale
Lancs
WN8 8AZ

One West Lancs Thematic Groups

To date One West Lancs Thematic Groups have been set up looking at issues in the following areas:

- [Skills, Training and Employment Partnership \(STEP\)](#)
- [Community Safety Partnership](#)
- [Health and Wellbeing Partnership](#)
- [Children and Young People's Board](#)
- [People and Communities](#)
- [Ageing Well Partnership](#)
- [Transport](#)

The above links will take you to pages on the One West Lancs website where information on the thematic groups and copies of their action plans, minutes and agendas can be found.

www.onewestlancs.org