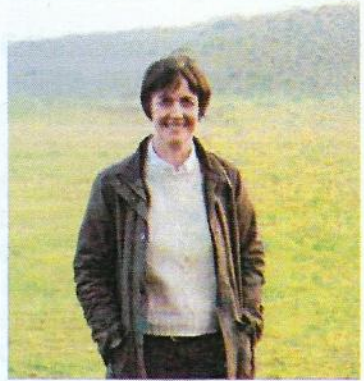


**County Councillor Philippa Williamson**  
Leader, Lancashire County Council  
**Lancaster Rural North**



## **Review of 2022–2023 Over Kellet Annual Parish Council**

Hello,

Once again, it has been a very busy but enjoyable year representing Over Kellet and all the residents of Lancaster Rural North as your county councillor.

Looking back over the year, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations were a particular highlight. The community spirit was incredible locally and across the county with schools and village centres transformed into a sea of colour and adorned with majestic decorations to mark the occasion. The County Council's registration service even gave a special commemorative coin to parents who registered the birth of their child over the Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend!

Very sadly, only four months later, we received the news of Her Majesty's death and the County Council's role was to help enact the national plan for this eventuality whilst also marking the succession of King Charles III. As a permanent reminder of Her Majesty, her service to the country and mark her special relationship with Lancashire as our Duke of Lancaster, we have renamed the Assembly Hall to the council chamber at County Hall the Platinum Jubilee Room.

In February we all also watched on in horror as the Russian invasion of the Ukraine began. The County's Refugee Integration Team is leading work with districts and other partners on the Homes for Ukraine scheme. So far we have supported more than 1,200 people who have resettled in Lancashire and many families in the district have generously opened up their homes to Ukrainian guests. A great deal has happened throughout the year so here are just some highlights of what the County Council has been doing:

## Delivering better services

- Launched our Love Clean Streets App to make it easier to report highway faults on the go.
- Repaired more than 67,000 potholes on our roads.
- Launched a pilot average speed camera scheme on five of the county's most high-risk A-Roads. Two of those roads are in our area - the A683 (junction 34 of the M6 to Kirkby Lonsdale), and the A6 in Lancaster (the city centre to J33 of the M6).
- Brought in-house our Parking Enforcement teams – to better target activity especially around the night-time economy
- M601(M) - £9.245m on maintenance & improvements, will save £30m for highways work in our area
- Supported a range of flood prevention schemes including the Warton Mires project
- Keeping rural bus services running
- Collaborated in a ground-breaking TV documentary series following the work of Lancashire's Coroner's Service.
- Held the inaugural Lancashire Choir of the Year competition
- Launched 'Crowd Fund Lancashire' – A £500,000 fund to support community-led ideas for cultural and sporting activities.
- Hosted two Parish and Town Council conferences – I am proud to say the parish and town councils in Lancaster Rural North were very well represented. As a result liaison and collaboration between the County Council and our local parish and town councils is maturing - so we can all do more to support and improve services and amenities in our area.

## Caring for the vulnerable

- Improved adult and children's social care so these services are better joined-up with those delivered by the NHS to help avoid hospital admissions and get patients out of hospital more quickly.
- Improved Children's Services - now graded by Ofsted as GOOD.
- Built a new specialist adult care home and a new children and adult short break centre.
- Launched our Warm and Welcome scheme focussed on the library network. Working with parish and town councils and local community groups over 150 places have been established for residents to go to where they know they will get a warm, friendly welcome together with hot drinks and advice if they need it. Carnforth Library was the first in the county to launch the scheme.

## Protecting the environment

- Lancashire held its first Climate Summit and unveiled its climate and environment strategy.
- Petrol and diesel cars in the councils fleet were replaced with electronic vehicles.
- Installed hundreds of electric vehicle charging points and piloting new ways of EV charging for people who do not have off-street parking (66% of housing in the county is terraced), including charging points integrated into street lighting columns and pavement cable channels to allow charging at home, hiding the cable under the pavement.
- The county's first rubber roads were laid using technology that will revolutionise road repairs, help the environment, and save money.
- Enhanced our Household Waste Recycling Centres – including Keer Bridge – to provide vital support to residents and businesses.

## Supporting economic growth

- Published our first ever Economic Strategy.
- Building a new first class cricket ground in Lancashire on land owned by the County Council in a commercial partnership with Lancashire Cricket Club. The year-round facility will host top class men's and women's competitive matches each year, as an alternative site to Emirates Old Trafford. It will also provide a new training base for all Lancashire's men's and women's teams, from age-group to the first team. The new facilities will be made available to the local community, including for local cricket clubs and schools across the whole county.
- Successfully bid for over £200m of projects in Lancashire from the second round of the government's Levelling Up Fund. This included £50m to develop public transport, walking and cycling projects and £50m towards Eden North.
- Funding & supporting small & medium sized businesses - 'Red Rose Fund' & 'Boost'
- Operating Business Parks – Lancaster White Cross & elsewhere and expanding our Enterprise Zones
- Developing of the £5billion GCHQ Centre at Salmesbury
- Published the Lancashire 2050 strategic framework at the Speakers' Rooms in Westminster. Broadcast live by the BBC, we showcased all that is great about Lancashire in the heart of Government in our drive to attract more investment to the county.

Lancashire is a huge county - around 1200 square miles, 80% of which is rural and with a population of 1.2m people. To deliver all the front-line services residents expect and more costs just over £1bn a year (our 620+ schools are funded separately by the government). Of that £1bn budget, 65% is spent on adult and children's social care and £163m is available for highways, transport and 'active travel' (walking/cycling). Running the libraries, museums, conservation, archive and music services; supporting economic development activity and helping over 3000 businesses, takes up the rest of the budget.

We all contribute to that £1bn through our council taxes and it is essential we get value for money. Over the last year the council has been impacted by rising costs like the rest of the county. But these pressures have been met whilst maintaining the full range of services.

For 2023/24. Council Tax has increased by 3.99% - the same increase as last year - and means the county council will deliver balanced budgets for the four years ahead, as well retaining healthy financial reserves to protect against any future economic volatility. In contrast, over 80% of county councils across the country raised their council tax bills by 4.99% - some by up to 10% and many do not have reserves of similar levels as Lancashire to call on if needed.

**Please get in touch** - It is an enormous privilege to be your County Councillor. It is also a great pleasure to work with residents and Parish Councillors who each work so hard to support the community and improve amenities in the village.

The County Council has a number of small grant schemes to help parish and town councils and local community groups. These cover public rights of way, biodiversity and community activities. As your county councillor I also have grant funding to support grass roots community projects. So, if you think that a project you are working on may benefit from this funding, or if there are any issues you would like my support with please let me know and I will do my very best to help.

**County Councillor Phillippa Williamson**

Leader, Lancashire County Council

**Lancaster Rural North**

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