

## **Annual Report. Environment and Place. 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025.**

I want to say first something that's often said last. Thank you to all the staff for all the work you do, often showing dedication above and beyond. The staff who are out on the front line in the most difficult circumstances. Maybe clearing things like fly tips and litter, with all the horrible things they sometimes must deal with. Lots of examples from the past, like the gas explosion in Heysham a few years ago. There's the more recent example of the fire at Supa Skips. The one that impressed me this year was the minute- by-minute email commentary of Kirsty Banks-Lyon as the last big storm was breaking over us. Great communications.

We all know the Environment Portfolio is big, but for anyone who takes this job the first real surprise is the diversity of it. My able predecessor did warn me about this but its only on first contact that the reality hits home. I mention Councillor Ainscough to give her credit and not share blame. I have continued every initiative that she put in motion because all of them have merit.

The department impinges on every aspect of every resident's life, both in the house and outside it.

If you're dealing with refuse, we have rules, if your neighbour keeps lighting fires when your washings out, you send us a message. If you find a wasps nest, the same. Fancy a walk in the park? Our staff make that possible.

Don't feel well after eating out? You might need us.

I haven't even got to bins, litter, fly tips, recycling and checking on the ships at Heysham. And there's plenty more.

So, what has the department achieved this year?

Our green spaces are a primary resource for our residents. Their condition is a vital indicator of how well our Public Realm team are performing. A huge amount of work has been carried out in these places, including the following:

**Greaves Park, Ryelands Park, Rylands Estate, Scotch Quarry, Regents Park, Miss Whalley's Field, Storey Gardens, The Roods, Winchester Field and Nature Area, Happy Mount Park, Bay Cottage, Lune Bank Gardens, Palatine, Sycamore Play Park, Green Ayre, Barley Cop Woods.**

This is far from the complete list but just a tiny fraction of the total list of Green Spaces where work has taken place.

Our green spaces have benefited from section 106 funding, which is levied on developers to mitigate the impact of new developments on local infrastructure and community services.

### **This is the list of S106 funding secured since April 2024**

- Lucy Brook – **£35,000**
- St Georges Quay - **£20,000**
- Bondgate Dolphinhholme - **£89,397.75**
- Oakmere Development - **£10,708.16**
- Middleton Playing Fields - **£55,609.50**
- Middleton Pump Track - **£14,780.00**
- Total** **£225,000**

Lancaster has five Green Flag Parks. **In Morecambe we have Happy Mount Park, Regent Park, and Torrisholme Cemetery, and in Lancaster, Williamson Park and Ryelands Park.** Green Flags are not awarded without meeting strict criteria, and constant work is involved to maintain them.

But for me Alexandra Park in the West End of Morecambe is the current crown jewel. Everyone should go and see it. It looks fabulous.

### **Tennis Court Funding through the LTA**

Working in partnership with LTA we have secured funding to refurbish two tennis venues to a total of over £79,000 helping ensure that quality facilities are available for the local community. The venues being renovated are: 3 courts at Palatine Recreation Ground and 1 court at Happy Mount Park. We have committed to work with the LTA to deliver a range of activity across the park sites. This will include weekly organised free park tennis sessions for all ages, playing for all levels and experience, and where equipment is provided, meaning that people will not need someone to play with or their own racket. Local Tennis Leagues will also provide friendly, sociable opportunities to get active through local competition. Courts will open around April/May 2025 to include gated access and online booking system.

The new White Lund Depot is built and working. We should all get an understanding of the range of tasks Environment undertakes. I encourage every Councillor to book a tour.

**GWS.** Delivering the requirements of the national waste strategy is the priority for our waste and recycling teams both here and in every Council. Final proposals will be brought forward in due course.

A successful trial of HVO fuel has been done. This fuel is made from vegetable oil rather than mineral oil. This will cost an extra £155,000 p.a. if we use it. Important to note that it doesn't just reduce Co2 emissions by around 85%, it also reduces particulate emissions by around 50%. It's my view that with these vehicles constantly in use all over our area, we have a duty of care to our residents to use the new fuel. I hope others agree.

The AQAP was approved by Defra in December 2024. If we're going to have a plan of this sort, we shouldn't be using ordinary diesel in our vehicles.

But there is a proviso here. A very recent BBC investigation alleges that much HVO is not made from waste vegetable oil but virgin palm oil, which causes deforestation. We need to know the truth before making the switch.

The new 26 tonne vehicles will have electric bin lifts and solar panels on the roof. This will save fuel, further reduce emissions and noise pollution.

The 12 tonne food waste vehicles have integrated bin lifts because electric operation isn't an option now.

The bin sensor technology is now installed in most litter bins. This is reducing mileage substantially because the bins can be checked remotely.

We've dealt with 3,127 fly tip reports with two teams covering the whole of the Lancaster City District of 567 sq. km. But these teams are often given other duties as well.

The amalgamation of Lancashire County's Love Clean Streets reporting software with Lancaster's Granicus reporting software is moving along. I hope that it will be fit for a trial in about a month to six weeks from now.

I anticipate an increase in the number of reports of all types that we will have to deal with in future because the newly integrated reporting software will be much easier to use.

We've dealt with 126 graffiti incidents.

3 asbestos incidents.

2774 pest control incidents.

We've deployed an electric Addex street vacuum in Lancaster in the last few weeks. It's a big improvement.

I want another of these machines for Morecambe and negotiations are under way.

### **MOU**

Although the MoU with Morecambe Town Council hasn't been finalised or signed yet I have high hopes for it. The two councils need to help each other much more and I'm confident we can do this.

But the list of tasks Environment and Place has responsibility for is much more extensive than can told here in the Chamber. Please contact me if information is required on any matter that I have failed to mention.

***Paul Hart.***