



Parish Information

Lanchester Neighbourhood Plan 2019 - 2034 Appendix 1

Parish Information

Geographical size and location



View towards Burnhope

Lanchester Parish is located in County Durham, in the former district of Derwentside. It is centred 8 miles to the west of the city of Durham and 5 miles south east of Consett. The parish covering 4,052,093 hectares, extends from Burnhopeside Hall in the east to beyond the A68 in the west, from Spring Gardens in the north almost to Quebec in the south. Within the Parish there are also small hamlets including Malton, Hurbuck, Hollinside and Ornsby Hill.

The parish is centred on OS Grid Reference NZ165475. The valley bottom lies 115m above sea level, with ground rising to 200m towards Burnhope in the North and Hollinside in the south.



Village

The village is situated in a broad valley in the foothills of the north Pennines, in a landscape of mainly pasture, woodland, and arable farmland although the sides of the valley are steep around the village itself. Smallhope Burn and Alderdene Burn, tributaries of the River Browney, flow through the village.

Lanchester Parish is located in the heart of the West Durham Coalfield, and can be defined as being in a coalfield valley on the upland fringe. Coal has been extracted via drift mining at various times in the history of the parish and has also been used to create coke and support other industries within the Parish. Whilst historically the Parish has been an agricultural one with good quality agricultural land, other natural resources in the parish which have been extracted in the past include iron, clay, building stone and wood.

Farmland fields are bounded by hedges and dry stone walls, by heathland, semi-natural birch and oak woodlands and by a network of enclosure roads and lanes. It is a predominantly rural landscape with Lanchester village lying in the east of the Parish in a pastoral setting. There is a spread of scattered hamlets and farms to the west of the village as the landscape moves towards uplands and moorlands.

The westernmost part of the Parish lies within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the eastern part of the Parish is designated by the current County Plan as an area of high landscape value. Much of Lanchester village is in a Conservation Area. Five local wildlife sites and a number of designated ancient woodlands are scattered across the valley. To the north east, the parish boundary is adjacent to the Great North Forest.

History and Heritage

There is limited evidence of prehistoric activity in Lanchester Parish prior to the arrival of Roman rule. The most notable finds from the prehistoric period are undated flint tools, a flint leaf-shaped arrowhead dating to the Neolithic period, and cup and ring marked stones found at Little Greencroft and Hollinside.

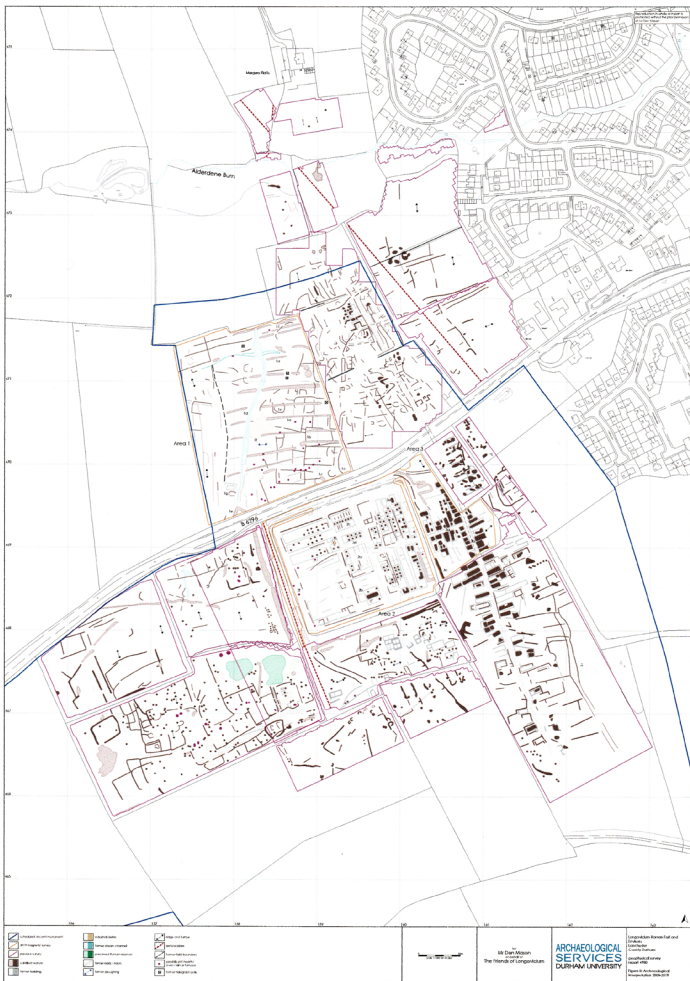
With the arrival of Roman rule in Britain, Lanchester became a hive of activity with the establishment of a fort known as Longovicium and a substantial associated civil settlement and cemetery.



Aerial view of fort



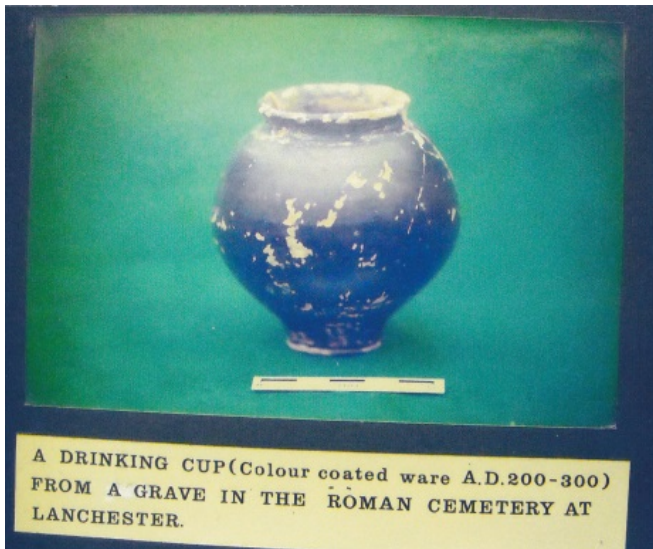
LIDAR image (Light Imaging Detection And Ranging)



Geophysical Survey - Fort and civilian settlement

The fort was initially constructed during the mid-2nd century AD and was occupied through the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. The Roman remains at Lanchester have never been fully excavated, but since 1990 geophysical surveys have revealed the structure of the fort interior and the probable extent of the civilian settlement.

'Geophysical survey work carried out showing the outlines of buildings and other features both within the Roman fort and outside in the vicus area surrounding it. The work was commissioned by The Friends of Longovicium, which is part of the Lanchester Partnership and carried out with the assistance of Archaeological Service Durham University. The work was carried out with the permission of the landowners Nick Greenwell and The Austin Family as well as English Heritage.'



Examples of Roman artefacts



Examples of Roman artefacts

In addition to the fort and civil settlement, Dere Street, the main Roman road linking York and Hadrian's Wall, ran through the landscape and infrastructure relating to the water supply for the fort and civilian settlement still survives in places.



Map of Dere Street

Longovicium is a scheduled ancient monument as are parts of the aquaduct serving it. The impact of the arrival of the Roman army in the area should not be underestimated, as quarrying, woodland clearance, and cultivation on a large scale would have been necessary to support the soldiers, civilians, horses, livestock and some industry.

Following the collapse of Roman rule the population was likely to be much smaller, the only firm evidence for activity at Lanchester during this period is a hoard of eighteen iron objects found during the 1860s, dated to the 9th-11th centuries and now held by the British Museum.

Life in the later medieval period, from the 11th to the 15th centuries, left more traces in archival material, on the landscape and in a small number of surviving buildings. Woodland was cleared for agriculture, All Saints Parish Church was constructed in stone, and the present village was established around the church.



All Saints Parish Church

Stone from the Roman fort was used in the church and the first rector is recorded in 1143. By 1183 Lanchester is described as one of the great manors of the See of Durham, surrounded by forests and moors. In 1284, a deanery and college of canons was created, reflecting the important role of Lanchester as an ecclesiastical centre, with a much larger parish than today. The college survives only as buried archaeological remains. Some medieval houses survive in the village, notably Peth Cottage and Deanery Cottages. Other medieval villages in the current parish include Newbiggin and Colepik.

In the 16th century, Lanchester had a small population farming the land, grazing stock on the hilltops and fells to the west of the parish, and coppicing hazel for the coal industry. Little survives in the village or landscape today to shed light on this period.



Old houses in centre of village

By the mid-18th century, new houses were being built in Lanchester itself, around the village green and on Front Street, with surrounding hamlets, farms and steadings scattered across the parish. The Enclosure of the Parish in 1773 led to the creation of the landscape seen today, with rough fell land brought into new agricultural field systems. Miles of stone walls and fences were constructed with new roads and lanes criss-crossing what was once common land. Large houses were built in the village and further afield, such as the 17th century Greencroft Hall (demolished) and the 18th century Woodlands Hall, some with associated parkland and landscaping.

Major changes in industry from the 18th century through to the early 20th century impacted on the landscape and the communities living there. The extraction of coal in the east of the Parish, quarrying, the construction of railways, brick, iron and coke works were all significant in this. Evidence of this industry survives in places, most notably in the reused lines of waggon-ways and railways that are now enjoyed for recreation. Malton, Hurbuck and Hollinside were home to mining communities.



Aerial view of workhouse

Within the village itself, the 19th century brought a wealth of new building, both to provide accommodation and to house trade, but also in the civic sphere. The large Lanchester workhouse consisted of several buildings in the heart of the village, including the Board meeting rooms which now house the library.

Petty sessions were held in Lanchester which was a judicial centre for West Durham. Chapels and a parochial school were built. The population was growing, as was prosperity, aided in part by the new transport routes such as the Witton Gilbert to Shotley Bridge road, and the Durham to Consett railway, both of which ran through the village.



Station House and train



Station House today

During this flourishing period, several significant men and women lived in Lanchester:

- Thomas White, trained by Capability Brown, designed and built Woodlands Hall. He received many awards from the Society of Arts for his planting, drainage and farm works.
- William Hedley, one of the founding fathers of the railways, inventor of the 'Puffing Billy' and 'Wylam Dilly' resided at Burnhopeside Hall
- Doctor William Greenwell historian, archaeologist, author and later Canon of Durham Cathedral was from Greenwell Ford and is buried in Lanchester
- Dora Greenwell, sister of Doctor William Greenwell, poet and advocate for women's votes and education, born at Greenwell Ford.

The 20th century left its mark on Lanchester, with a decline of industrial activities in the Parish followed by a flurry of opencast and strip mining in the middle of the century. Coal was extracted and land reinstatement followed, causing a loss of historic landscape. Other reminders of the last century can be seen on a number of memorials to those who served in the two world wars and other conflicts, and in abandoned military structures and prisoner of war camps. Within the village itself sections of the Smallhope and Alderdene Burns were culverted, new housing constructed, and the population grew significantly before dipping slightly. The railway closed and the bypass was constructed in 1970.



Before and after the by pass



Wildlife Habitats

Lanchester Parish includes a number of diverse habitats: farmland, heathland, grassland, woodland and brownfield land. A wide variety of species of plants, birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates populate the area. Many of these thrive at sites conserved by Durham Wildlife Trust at Malton, Longburn Ford and Black Plantation and the Woodland Trust site at Dora's Wood. However, habitat continues to be reduced through agricultural modification of areas such as heathland in the upper Browney Valley.

There is little remaining ancient woodland apart from Deanery Wood, Loves Wood and tracts at Malton. Smaller pockets can be found but these are not recorded. A significant contribution to wildlife habitat is provided along the wide verges of roads in the west of the parish which were created during the enclosure acts. Brownfield sites also present good habitat opportunities and the nature reserve at Malton on old colliery land is particularly attractive to many species. Natural heritage is constantly evolving and requires adequate consideration and resources if this asset is to withstand further erosion.



Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary Butterfly (Stuart Priestley)



Butterfly Orchid



Malton



Doras Wood

Landscape and Views

The land in the Parish varies from good arable to rough fell land of poorer quality. Some areas are very steep sided and have been used for woodland.

The Boldon Book (1183) mentions a number of holdings with the various rents and duties owed to the Bishop. In Medieval times, the better land was extensively farmed, with many of the existing 21st century holdings being mentioned in the Parish Registers, and in the Halmote Court Records. Much of the higher fell land was in common occupation until the two main Enclosure Acts of the late 1700s created the distinctive enclosure landscape of straight roads, regular fields and numerous quarries. New farms were also created on these lands. The 19th century brought extensive coal extraction, with many farms being bought by the coal companies as part of the need to feed horses, ponies and their many work folk.

Traces of past industrial activity remain in the landscape, as does some historic parkland. There are areas of replacement woodland following the end of opencast mining including conifer plantations acting as shelterbelts on the upper slopes of the Parish. The landscape continues to change however. Potential threats to landscape character and habitat are changes in agricultural practices leading to loss of heathland and also development of land for housing around the village fringes.

Following the 1947 Nationalisation of the Coal Industry, up to 50% of the land in the areas of outcrop coal was open-casted. Consequently many remains of early landscape, settlements and industry have been lost, though some of the reinstated land has been improved for farming.

The parish includes coniferous plantations but these are increasingly being felled and often replanted with deciduous trees. Wind farms are a prominent feature in views of the landscape to the north and on the south west approach to Lanchester, although none lie within the Parish boundary.

As in many areas of County Durham, the farm steadings were largely rebuilt in the period between 1780 and 1860, though there is some evidence of pre 1800 vernacular features, indicating black thatch and stone roofs with wrestler ridges.



Smithy at Five Lane Ends



Smithy interior

The older steadings often complete until the 1960s are rapidly being lost, due to conversion to houses and the need to build modern farm buildings which can accommodate larger machinery. Many farms have been amalgamated and the small mixed farm with milking cows is now a thing of the past.

Horses and ponies kept for pleasure, have become a major feature in the parish since the 1970s, and represent a significant use of what was farming land.

The views in, across and around Lanchester constitute a vital part of the heritage of the Parish, valued and enjoyed by residents for the positive impact they have on day to day life and appreciated on a daily basis by those living, working, walking and driving in the vicinity.

These panoramas and vistas collectively create, demonstrate and tell the story of Lanchester's development through the centuries, forming a key element of the 'sense of place' within the community.

For example there are three view points above the village which reflect different aspects of the history of the parish.



To the west is Humber Hill at 270m. This has a trig point and affords a 360 degree panoramic view of the area. It is believed that a Roman signal station was located here when Longovicium Fort, just a mile away was established.



To the south at West Hamsteels Farm (210m) there is a WW2 pillbox on private land. It was built in 1940 to protect the Consett to Durham railway line and the industrial site at Malton in the valley below, both now dismantled.



To the east is the Burnhope Picnic site (258m) where beacons are lit to mark important events. The most recent being the beacon lit on 11th November 2018 to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1.

Views above village

Conservation Area and Article 4 Area

The core of the village is a designated Conservation Area that includes an Article 4 Direction. This direction relates to defined areas within the Conservation Area to encourage the retention of high quality or distinctive features such as windows or chimneys, building materials or boundary walls.

The conservation area boundary encompasses the historic core of the village, including the village green and Front Street. It was reviewed and the boundary extended in 2017. It includes the Victorian and Edwardian developments which radiate out from the village centre and the important routeways into the village, namely Durham Road, Peth Bank, Newbiggen Lane, Cadger Bank and Maiden Law Bank. There are also important open spaces, including the Lanchester Valley Walk, Deanery Wood and the area of rolling hillside to the east of the A691 which includes the area known locally as Paste Egg Bank.



Front Street

Flooding



Flooding 2016



Flooding

Historically the village has been prone to flooding, particularly within the Conservation Area. Since 2000 it has become more prevalent, with several significant incidents.

Substantial flood alleviation works have been undertaken in recent years including works to the culvert and drainage system.

Housing

Within the Conservation Area



Conservation Area housing

The essential character of Front Street and the main core of the village is set by the simple two storey, gabled local sand-stone buildings dating from the 19th Century and earlier.

The north-eastern side of the street, consists of an almost continuous facade of two storey gabled buildings either of stone or coloured stucco with simple double-pitched slate or stone slab roofs. Variation is provided by the subtle changes in the alignment of the frontages and in the eaves and ridge levels. Significant to the character of these buildings and the village, with the exception of a single modern house and a well-designed short terrace of four houses, there are only outbuildings between the backs of these properties and the Smallhope Burn and By-pass.



Bluebell Court

Bluebell Court, which replaced The Lanchester Arms, has retained the proportions and some of the character of the demolished building and added a small number of carefully designed houses to the rear. These face onto a 'courtyard' and back onto a woodland area adjacent to the burn. Access to the courtyard from Front Street makes use of an existing access.

This strong 'backbone' is complemented across Front Street by a more varied facade set back across walled garden or walled forecourt frontages. The majority of the buildings are of stone construction with the exception of the modern shops. Several are of distinctive individual design adding great interest and charm to the character of their surroundings. The Library, and the Methodist Church with its annex are of note.

The meandering building frontages provide constantly changing views along the street culminating, at its southern end, in a splendid view of the church across the Green.

At either end of Front Street, Church View and Croft View provide strong lines of buildings overlooking important open areas: the Village Green and the Lanchester Endowed Parochial school grounds with the open hillside beyond.



Hillside to north of EP School

The attractive Grade 1 Listed Parish Church is of mellow local sandstone, as are the other buildings around the Village Green with its mature trees. Together with The Deanery, Deanery Farm, Brook Villa (all listed buildings) and the King's Head they form the undoubted centre piece of the village.

The church is seen from many points throughout the village.



Parish Church and Village Green

The Conservation Area Appraisal and Lanchester Community Heritage Audit both note key buildings within the village.

Estate Development

Estate development since the late 1940s, consisting of detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows, mainly of uniform appearance, breaks with traditional village design. The extensive use of standard designs of brick with concrete roof tiles, taken from builders' 'pattern books', with bargeboards, fascias and departures from traditional proportions has added to the mix of architectural styles. Most estate development is hidden behind traditional frontages and is not highly visible from within the village framework.



Deanery View estate



Humberhill estate

Buildings in the Countryside



Burnhopeside Hall



Colepike Hall

Lanchester is a rural Parish and there are many traditional farmsteads scattered throughout. They are mostly built of stone with slate roofs in simple shapes and make a pleasing contribution to the landscape. Among them are many good barn conversions. There are also several historic country houses which include Burnhopeside Hall, Newfield Hall (formerly Greenwell Ford), Hollinside Hall, Colepike Hall and Woodlands Hall. Some have been subdivided and other estate buildings adapted for residential use.



Newbiggen

Modern farm buildings have largely been accommodated within the landscape by appropriate siting, detailing and landscape treatment.

The recent redevelopment of farm buildings at Newbiggen has created a modern hamlet where there had been a lost medieval one.

Hamlets

Within the parish of Lanchester are a number of outlying hamlets. Each has its own distinctive character and architectural unity. They sit well in the surrounding landscape. Hollinside, Malton and Ornsby Hill are all within an Area of High Landscape Value as designated in the current Derwentside District Local Plan. With the exception of Ornsby Hill, the hamlets are some distance from Lanchester village. None have nearby facilities other than a public telephone box or play equipment so residents travel to Lanchester or further for a shop, church or pub. Limited public transport means that most residents are heavily dependent on their cars.



Hollinside

Getting Around

Roads

Lanchester village is situated 8 miles NW of Durham City at a busy crossroads in the local road network. The principal through route is the A691 linking Consett and the surrounding area to Durham and the A1 motorway. The A6076 provides an important link from Newcastle to Lanchester whilst the B6296 and B6301 connect the village to the A68 Darlington to Edinburgh trunk road.

The main roads into the village are well wooded and attractively frame the views approaching the village.



Newbiggen Lane



Peth Bank



By-pass with open countryside

The A691 was re-routed in 1970 to by-pass the village centre and reduce the volume of traffic along the historic Front Street, protecting the old village from through traffic.

Within the wider parish there are minor roads, often former drove roads providing quieter routes for cyclists. Peth Bank, Cadger Bank, Newbiggen Lane and Ford Road are identified as historic key routes into the village.

Footpaths and Cycle Routes

There are many link paths and ginnels that allow safe and convenient pedestrian movement around the village and into the centre. This footpath network is an important community asset and people use it regularly instead of bringing cars into the village centre. In addition school children, students and their families use it regularly to walk to and from school.

The Lanchester Valley Walk which uses the route of the disused Durham to Consett Railway passes through the village and is a wonderful amenity for walkers, cyclists and riders. It provides the outlying settlements of Malton and Hurbeck with a safe off-road route into Lanchester village. It is part of the National Cycle Route and brings trade into the village.



Lanchester Valley Walk



Lanchester Valley Walk

There is also an extensive well-used network of footpaths around Lanchester allowing access into the wider countryside. Several are documented in the Heritage Walks Leaflets published in 2012.

Local Economy



Siris Factory

Over the years the mechanisation of agriculture, followed by the closure of the railway, livestock mart, coal mines, Siris factory, Lee Hill Hospital and Maiden Law Hospital has reduced employment within the village to mainly trades, services and work at the schools. Whilst there are many registered enterprises in the Parish, most people work in Newcastle, Sunderland, Durham and elsewhere.



Lanchester Dairies

The range of shops and businesses meets most daily requirements of residents and the services provided are well used.

Whilst farming is still the main activity in the surrounding countryside, diversification into other businesses is taking place. Upper Houses Farm has diversified into Lanchester Dairies, an established business and major employer. New uses of agricultural land include fruit growing, a garden centre and horse husbandry.

Tourism is of growing importance to the economy generally and the countryside in particular. The re-use and adaptation of existing rural buildings, especially on farms, has assisted with diversification of farming enterprises as well as providing for tourism, sport and recreation.

Most of the land within the Parish is privately owned farmland, which must meet economic needs in providing income for owners, tenants and their employees. As well as being seen as an attractive setting for those who live and work in the Parish, there is also support for making greater use of the countryside. However, in managing the rural environment to protect the countryside from non-agricultural use, care needs to be taken in defining the latter, as a narrow interpretation could restrict attempts by farmers to diversify as a means to maintain incomes.

Apart from horses, agricultural production centres on sheep and beef cattle. There were 35 active farmers within the Parish in 2008, with one working dairy farm. Policy change at both European and British Government level will continue to change the role in which farmers are seen in their stewardship of the countryside.

Land and water based sporting interests, such as shooting and fishing, will continue to make a contribution to a viable rural economy.

Small businesses will continue to bring money to the Parish, with the provision of broadband enabling the development of Internet based and Internet using businesses. With the freeing of these businesses from reliance on specific places and facilities, the continuous growth of the 'knowledge-based' economy increases the importance Lanchester, as an attractive place to live, work and play, has in the choice of business location.

Community and Leisure Facilities



The heart of the village is the village green overlooked by the Church, together with Front Street, its churches, schools, shops, restaurants and services including doctors, dentist, hairdressers, library, post office, pharmacy, veterinary practice and community centre. There are over 70 well supported community organisations providing activities ranging from keep fit, brownies, bridge, choral society, art clubs, film club, young farmers to Vintage Tractor Club. The three Churches are active in the Parish. A community newspaper, The Village Voice, delivered free to houses in the village regularly publicises activities and services in the community. The Lanchester Partnership is a well-supported charitable organisation developing and delivering community projects which enhance community life.



The community keeps fit through a range of sporting activities. Outdoors there are tennis courts, basketball, football, cricket, bowls and a multi-use games area and a bike track. Five play areas, a comprehensive network of walks and cycle paths plus fishing and horse-riding facilities complete the range of choices available.

The Community Centre has a fully equipped gymnasium and is a self-funding charitable organisation, open 7 days a week and used by over 40 different groups. It promotes the well-being of the village through cultural, social and recreational activities that bring people together.



There is a well-established Social Club offering a valued meeting point and facilities for social functions.

The village has a play group, toddler activities, nursery and three very good schools: two primary and one secondary.

There is a range of clubs and organisations for young people including boys brigade, brass band, brownies, children's dance, cricket club, guides, rainbows, tae kwando, tennis club and the wildlife group.



A list of groups, organisations and activities is contained in a Directory of Information About Lanchester (DIAL).

This all contributes to the sense of community as well as offering a support framework for residents' needs, both spiritual and social.

Community events

Administration

1839 saw the building of the Lanchester Workhouse. The Lanchester Union became responsible for an area of Parishes or Townships bordered by Gateshead, Chester le Street and Weardale Unions. The workhouse in Lanchester over time occupied a significant part of the village. It grew to include a hospital, Boardroom and offices, further accommodation and cottages for children. The Union was renamed in the 1930s and latterly functioned under Durham County Council Social Services as an Adult Training Centre. It is now converted to modern apartments

Lanchester Parish council has operated since 1895 to the present day. It has an office in Lynwood House and provides a wide range of services and facilities to the modern parish.



Lynwood House – Lanchester Community Heritage Audit – Launch event

Lanchester Rural District Council operated from 1894-1974. The Rural District Council met originally in the Court Room (now the Library) located in the Board of Guardians administrative building of the workhouse. It was responsible for a large area extending to the East to Langley Park, to the South to the edge of Tow Law, to the North to Annfield Plain and Consett and to the West to Edmundbyers Common. It had considerable responsibilities including: housing (from 1919 – the first Council Houses were approved in 1920 for Durham Road), approvals of new building, highways, public health (with it's own Medical officer of Health), street lighting, refuse collection and disposal and sanitation.

The Rural District Council became part of Derwentside District Council in 1974 until local government restructuring brought it into the unitary authority of Durham County Council in 2009.

