

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

INFORMATION

meeting date: 25th MAY 2021
title: GENERAL REPORT
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1 PURPOSE

To update committee on a variety of developments in sports, arts and community development and performance of the Platform Gallery.

2 COVID – RAW MATERIAL SHORTAGE:

- 2.1 Due to a global shortage of raw materials the production of refuse waste bins has been affected. At the moment the council is unable to order burgundy bins for residual waste. As a result the only colour that can presently be produced is grey. The council have been lucky enough to have already ordered the green and blue bins so have a stock of both. However, any requests for residual bins will be provided with a grey bin with a burgundy lid. It is the council's intention, at this time, to replace the grey bins with burgundy bins when production restarts. The best guess for this date is the end of June at the earliest and the council has orders in place for when this happens. Unfortunately, the forecast is that there will be a substantial increase in price when they are available.

It would appear that the same shortage is affecting a number of other trades including building materials. These again, when available are expected to be substantially more expensive. This will increase the costs of all the maintenance of all the building work.

3 LITTER BIN/DOG FOULING WORKING GROUP

- 3.1 The above working group has been set up by Health and Housing Committee chaired by Jan Alcock. It has been set up to consider the location, number, frequency of collection of the bins together with the means of collection of the bins.

A study of the existing bins has been carried out and the numbers, locations and types of bins, including photographs, plotted on a plan. There are approximately 551 litter bins presently in the borough.

The bins are collected by a mixture of the dog wardens, street cleansing and the refuse teams. The bins are generally collected once per week and it is recognised that the existing collecting resource is up to capacity.

Since the advent of covid lockdown the number of people walking has increased. There have been numerous requests for extra bins all over the borough and the working group will take this on board whilst deliberating the issue.

Type	Count
Dog	113
Litter	404
Recycling	34

4 CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

- 4.1 One Carbon World, a delivery partner of the UN Climate Neutral Now scheme, is currently helping the Council to calculate its carbon footprint. They will also make recommendations for how the Council can reduce its footprint by reducing carbon emissions, retiring carbon credits, supporting emission reduction and forestry projects, and contributing to sustainable development.

The Climate Change working group will develop a Climate Change Strategy which will be based on an understanding of the Council's current carbon emissions, its carbon footprint, and will address how the Council intends to reach the target of being carbon neutral by 2030 through the action plan.

It is intended that the strategy will be presented to Policy and Finance committee for approval in June 2021.

RVBC officers are in the process of identifying ways in which alternatively fueled vehicles can be used by the council, or where EV vehicles can make use of the council's facilities to contribute towards a reduction in carbon emissions. Charge points available for public use have already been installed on two RVBC car parks in Clitheroe, with 4 points available on Railway View and 10 points on Chester Avenue. The charging points are not being regularly used presently but this might just be down to the fact that drivers of EV cars are not aware of their presence. Officers are also currently investigating the possibility of workplace charge points being installed at the Council Office building, with surveys being carried out and discussions taking place with different providers.

Council fleet vehicle transition to alternatively fueled vehicles is also something being looked at, however there are limitations with this due to the type of vehicles available and the challenges of working across a large rural borough. For example, at this time EV refuse vehicles would not suit our purpose, however there might be scope for hybrid vehicle use that would still allow us to fully carry out our duties whilst reducing the amount of pollution created.

5 GRANTS

Since the last meeting of committee, the working group, in consultation with officers, has agreed the following applications under the Ribble Valley In Bloom scheme

APPLICANT	PROJECT	GRANT
Bolton-by-Bowland Gisburn Forrest & Sawley Parish Council	Spring planting in each village centre (Tosside, Bolton-by-Bowland and Sawley	£347
Gisburn Parish Council	Provision of floral displays primarily at 2 locations in the village – Cenotaph Gardens and wooden floor boxes at eastern end of village.	£37

Whalley Cricket Club / Whalley in Bloom	To plant up the border at the Cricket Club entrance beside the railway bridge with sustainable shrubs, climbers and spring bulbs.	£360
West Bradford Parish Council	Bedding plants for tubs at various locations around the village plus Coronation Gardens and War Memorial	£84
Wiswell Parish Council	Extensive planting initiative throughout the village.	£60
Rimington and Middop Parish Council	Purchase of bulbs for newly acquired planters x 3	£45
Waddington Parish Council	Purchase of 2 x floor planters, compost and bulbs	£120
		£1053

6 ARTS DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

6.1 Arts Grant Funding 2021 / 22

Since the committee approval in March 2021, the government Covid roadmap was announced opening the possibility of events to be planned after 21st June (at the earliest, Step 4). With this new guidance it is possible for groups to begin planning for events / projects earlier than expected. It is proposed that the grants working group once established will be asked to consider applications for the small amount of unallocated funds still available this year.

At the same time, the panel will also be asked to consider another round of awards for arts excellence grants, now young people are able to begin some arts activity. Much of their activity was curtailed due to covid.

These second-round applications would be reviewed by the grant working group in early August to put forward recommendations for the Community Committee on the 24th August.

6.2 Online Art Workshops “Get The Knack – Learn New Creative Skills”

During the Covid pandemic almost all Ribble Valley based arts classes and clubs had to close their doors. Many residents attend these groups to support their physical and mental wellbeing through social interaction, creative stimulation and a sense of community. RVBC Arts Development are to create short online sessions for people to do at home in their own time, keeping them creative and active until government restrictions allow group activity to begin again.

Ribble Valley based artists & creatives in all art disciplines were invited to submit activities for our community to enjoy free online. This has created a new income

opportunity for up to 6 Ribble Valley based self-employed businesses whose incomes have been affected by Covid, proving extra publicity, and supporting their business recovery. The artists will create and film content to be edited into 5-15min sessions that will be placed on the RVBC YouTube channel and promoted by social media, direct email outs and press releases.

As government restrictions are constantly changing in response to Covid infection rates organisers of indoor group activities are still in a position where they are unable to plan for viable reopening of sessions. Creating online sessions will provide options for residents to keep mentally and physically stimulated until the Covid situation allows.

7 PLATFORM GALLERY UPDATE

During the first lockdown in 2020 galley staff were mainly re-deployed to support the Community Hub from the Council Offices. The downtime presented an opportunity to undertake essential maintenance work which included deep cleaning and complete re-decoration throughout the building.

A re-opening was possible in December, traditionally the busiest period and provided a welcome opportunity for retail activity during the run up to Christmas.

During the periods of being open, visitor numbers have been low compared to normal levels, though feedback has been extremely positive about the measures implemented to safeguard customers against. Since the latest re-opening on 12 April footfall is an estimated 40% down compared to pre-covid levels.

Staff have been able to take advantage of on-line training courses available in marketing and promotion. Social media has enabled images of stock to be viewed by potential purchasing customers before visiting the site.

The exhibition programme has been planned for 2021 and 2022 commencing with 'Platform and Function' which runs from April to June 2021 and followed by the Craft Open and then Northern Star.

The 'Mix' space at the far end of the building, normally available for bookings from hirers looking to showcase collections or deliver workshops, has been closed since the introduction of control measures. Hopefully, changes after 21 June will enable single bookings and stall hire to re-start.

Sunday opening will commence from 23 May and the Gallery is then open every day of the week for the summer period.

To help with the process of sourcing new work and compare operating practices with other similar facilities across the area, visits to venues in the retail commercial sector are being arranged. The main objectives being to analyse the price points of work on display, obtain display ideas, observe Covid protocols and practices, and help improve the overall customer experience.

The number of lines carried in the Gallery shop has now been raised allowing more new makers to feature in the offer. The bought stock has been refreshed as new ranges of cards and visitor orientated information materials/books have replaced lines identified as poor selling.

A new till system is in the process of being installed at the end of June to help as a replacement for a dated cash register machine. The benefits to the operation are in provide more efficiency with administrative tasks, especially stock management. It is

expected that this will enable staff to spend more time in dealing with customers and in generating sales.

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