

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

INFORMATION

meeting date: 10TH JANUARY 2023
title: GENERAL REPORT
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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update committee on a variety of developments in sports, arts and community development and performance of the Platform Gallery.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
- Helping to make people's lives healthier and safer
 - To ensure a well-managed Council

2 SKATE PARK LEASE

The Skate Park in the Castle Grounds is leased to the Grand for a peppercorn rent. They have the skatepark and the multi games area plus the old tennis court. They recently improved the lighting by installing LED bulbs and upgraded the CCTV.

The multi games area which is tarmac surround by a metal fence and is used for football, and basketball mainly is looking run down, the Council had asked the Grand to paint the metal work which is the main piece of work which needs to be carried out. The Grand have asked for the area to be taken out of their lease because they no longer use it formally and wish it to be taken back by the Council.

This matter was considered by CMT, and the Grand will be informed that the Council does not wish to amend the lease, so the multi games area will remain the responsibility of the Grand, including the maintenance of the fabric.

3 CASTLE GROUNDS

A recent risk assessment of the trees in the area was undertaken, this was followed by some arboricultural work to address the issues which were identified. Some of this work meant reducing the size of the trees or removal of dead limbs, one major tree has been identified as risk and this may need to be removed entirely.

The need to carry out such risk assessments is important, although not removing the risk of failure entirely, given that trees are living things which can because of storm damage fail unexpectedly, the tree risk assessments is prudent activity to carry out as it helps identify the visible risks and identifies a course of action to be taken to maximize the safety of visitors to the area.

4 EDISFORD RIVERBANK

The concession at the site ends on 31st March 2023. The concession invites a business to provide ice cream and hot food to trade there. It is proposed that the concession be tendered again so that prospective operators can bid for the licence to

trade. One issue which has become increasingly problematical at the site has been the use of barbeques by visitors. There are signs which prohibit their use along with open fires, however the enforcement of this is challenging, given that most offences occur in the evening or at weekends.

5 ATRIUM CAFÉ

The operator for the café at the museum did not return after the lockdown in 2020, and since that time there has been no catering provision at the museum, the limited opening of the museum last year proved to be a problem for the service due to the various restrictions in place, therefore trying to get an operator was not viable. This year the Bowling Green Café has been in operation and the focus has been to establish that business, which has had a reasonable year and the operator has reported satisfaction with the way the business has developed though the summer, though it is now closed for the winter period.

It is proposed that the licence for the Atrium will now be advertised with the aim of getting a new operator into the site for Easter 2023. In the past the various operators that have attempted to make the service viable have struggled through the winter period when footfall is lowest both in the Castle Grounds and at the museum, indeed the museum closes for 2 days per week during the winter period itself.

Therefore, it is proposed that the requirement to be open every day will be relaxed to help an operator develop the business. Also, because the equipment in the café kitchen is now quite old, as it was installed as part of the major development in the museum in 2009/10, it may be necessary to engage an operator who is willing to invest in equipment needed to deliver the type of service they think will work.

If no operators come forward, an alternative option will be to consider the use of vending machines to provide a refreshment offer for museum visitors, and utilise the space of the café for other uses such as exhibitions.

6 CAR PARK MACHINES

The installation of the new pay and display machines is now complete. The Council has replaced all 22 machines on the pay and display car parks across the Borough with modern ones from IPS (International Parking Systems UK Ltd.).

The new machines allow users of all Ribble Valley P&D car parks to be able to pay with either cash or card, including contactless, (there is also an existing payment system via the web or a mobile app through MiPermit). The machines use the cellular network to be able to do this, apart from Dunsop Bridge where the signal strength is insufficient to enable the machines to operate as the others do, so for the time being until the network providers improve the signal there, that machine will just be operating on a cash basis.

The IPS machines also allow RVBC to utilise a far more informative back-office system which can provide live data on ticket sales, income, payment methods, ticket stock, etc.

Reports can be downloaded from the system for more accurate financial analysis and to allow officers to spot trends in tickets sales (e.g., which tariffs are most utilised, busiest times and days, etc).

Because the machines are all remotely linked to a central system it also allows for more effective error reporting if something goes wrong with a machine. Allowing staff to improve response times to deal with issues.

The pitch facility had to be closed during the very cold weather in December. Although some people believe that artificial pitch surfaces are all weather, they do get covered in snow and are subject to ground frost, therefore the term all weather is misleading as they do not exist. There is no safe way to deal with either weather condition, and the tarmac paths which provide access to the facility cannot be treated with rock salt like other pavements, because it would be transferred onto the pitches via players footwear causing contamination on the playing surface and potential damage to the pitch.

The football leagues cancelled their fixtures in any case and the decision was taken to cancel the club and casual bookings that had been taken for the facility. Although it was possible to host a football camp which had been booked in for the final week before Christmas.

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