

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

meeting date: 14th MARCH 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 MARDALE CAR PARK

The committee will recall an information report at your January meeting concerning this issue. Following that meeting a complaint was made to the Local Government Ombudsman about the way the Council handled the booking of the pitches, suggesting that we allowed too many matches to be played concurrently.

The Ombudsman has notified the Council that it does not plan to pursue an investigation into this matter and has closed the complaint, informing the resident of the outcome.

The Council will continue to work with the clubs to help minimise the impact of parking on the Mardale estate. As part of the work to refurbish the changing rooms, the car park will be resurfaced and relined, which will create additional parking spaces.

3. RV3G

The recent cold weather resulted in the pitch facility having to be closed. This caused some issues with users, who mistakingly believed the pitch was an all-weather facility. Unfortunately, such a facility does not exist anywhere. If the ground is frozen or covered in snow, the pitch surface is not immune from such weather conditions and is unsafe to play on.

In addition, after discussing with the pitch supplier, the use of rock salt on the access paths is forbidden, because of the contamination risk it presents to the fibres of the pitch and the potential for damage.

The disruption was limited to the period when the ground was frozen, and the users were offered an extension to their booked sessions which will be tagged on at the end

of their current hire agreement or a refund for those who just had individual sessions booked.

A call round to other similar facilities in East Lancashire saw all of them closed during the same period.

4. ARTS DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Clitheroe Contemporary Arts Festival 8 – 11th June 2023.

An exciting new development that we're supporting. Working together with a variety of partners we are aiming to develop an annual Arts Festival for the area. Taking the opportunity to apply for the new Lancashire Crowdfund to gain pledges from the public and LCC to make the first event happen. We need pledges from £2 to £200. Everything helps. At the moment it's an idea, with enough backing it's an event.

- A three-day festival from 8th – 11th June 2023,
- Pre-festival participation with schools and community groups
- Curated exhibitions, installations, performances, screenings and events
- Artist led workshops, talks and classes
- Open exhibition
- Art Fair with art works for sale
- Community open air painting competition
- Legacy of public artworks for the town
- Ongoing arts projects for young people

Find out more about what we have planned at <https://www.spacehive.com/clitheroe-contemporary>

Follow us on Facebook CCArtsFestival or Instagram @ccartsfestival to keep posted on developments.

4.2 DRAW CLITHEROE 5TH AUGUST 2023

Planning has begun to develop the second Draw Clitheroe event. In 2022 we invited artists and novices of all ages to join us in an array of drawing inspired activities across the town. The turnout and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Led by the Chamber of Trade multiple community partners came together bringing a variety of useful skills to create a very successful event.

4.3 ARTWALK CLITHEROE 26TH MARCH AND 8TH OCTOBER.

ArtWalk Clitheroe is back again this year. 6 Clitheroe galleries are open to the public on the above dates from 11 am - 4pm. Each unique space offering something different for the visitors. ArtWalk venues; Longitude Gallery, Knowle Top Studios, Stewards Gallery, Nicky Litchfield, Platform Gallery, Atelier Arts.

4.4 BRITISH TEXTILE BIENNALE. OCTOBER 2023

To curate an exhibition in The Mix at the Platform Gallery that promotes sustainability, explores art/craft as a regenerative force and highlights the current situation with local farmers and the production of wool. To compliment the theme of the textiles festival happening in neighbouring boroughs, looking at the environmental and human costs of the textile industry.

5. PLATFORM GALLERY

5.1 The Gallery provides an opportunity for residents of the Borough and visitors to the area to experience a wide variety of contemporary crafts. The recent exhibitions and those planned for the year ahead are outlined below:-

Exhibitions

- In the last financial year we have delivered 4 exhibitions:-
- Craft Open - An annual opportunity for artists working in Lancashire and surrounding counties who are both professional and amateur to display their work in an established craft gallery. This display is always varied and diverse and a great way to forge fresh relationships with artists working in the area.
- Connecting Crafts - Saw us work with two well established and revered northern craft groups Northern Potters Association and 10 Strong who are based at hot bed press in Salford to create an opportunity for visitors to explore the connections between 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional work across a variety of mediums.
- Made In Lancashire – We sourced work exclusively from Lancashire to showcase all the talent our wonderful region has to offer via an open call out. In the end 15 artists were selected and showcased through the summer- the height of the tourist season. To compliment the Lancashire theme we commissioned local Clitheroe artist Lucie Cooke to create some artwork celebrating Lancashire and the Ribble Valley in our windows.
- Northern Star- Our annual show case of British craft talent. This exhibition is focused on the gift giving season of Christmas and all goods sourced are of a giftable price point. This is a repeat exhibition and each year we build upon the last. We showcase around 30 – 40 makers some repeat from earlier successful exhibitions and some brand new to the gallery space.

Coming up we have a programme of 4 exhibitions:

- Platform & Function- this exhibition is an opportunity for visitors to see new developments in the world of the applied arts as the team from the gallery visit a selection of trade fairs to select work that gives a snapshot of what's going on Nationally in the world of functional craft.
- Craft Open- our annual showcase returns for 2023.
- Design Nation Take Over- For this exhibition we have linked up with the pioneering Craft and design organisation- Design Nation to bring a small showcase from their northern faction to Clitheroe for the Summer.

- Northern star- Another annual exhibition to return in 2023. We hope to build upon the successes of last year . The 2023 edit will include the bestselling artists from last year with even more new work than before. We aim to do this by starting to source a lot earlier in the year and widening the net by visiting new potential sourcing venues.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF BEST SELLERS AND LOCAL MAKERS

The implementation of the new till has made analysis of the sales in our exhibition and shop a lot easier and so has allowed us to react faster when lines are either selling well and restocks are required or indeed to identify slow selling artworks and change up displays.

Local artists based in the Ribble Valley and surrounding areas continue to be very popular at the gallery and the team continue to work hard supporting these artists and making connections with new ones.

One of the biggest challenges the shop has faced this last year is the cost of living crisis affecting the disposable income of visitors. With this in mind when marketing the shop we try trying to highlight and get behind both the buy local and buy better campaigns that have gained popularity in recent years. We are also mindful when sourcing work to go for work of a lower price point but still of high quality always ensuring good value.

Another challenge has been the unavailability of our storeroom due to repeated leaks throughout the last year and a strong smelling deceased rat within the cavity that has made the space unsuitable for the storage of artwork. This has hampered our availability to hold top up stock as we would like ,and so may have resulted in lost sales when stock has not been redisplayed as quickly as we would have liked. We hope to have this fully resolved in the new financial year should budgets allow.

The Gallery staff visit Craft Fayres on a periodic basis to source new stock and those planned include;- Artisan Made UK - Skipton, York Ceramics, Great Northern Contemporary craft fair – Manchester, Birmingham jewellery quarter.

6. RIBBLESDALE POOL

6.1 AQUATIC ACTIVITY FOR HEALTH AND WELL BEING

As part of ongoing efforts to extend the benefits of swimming to a wider audience, there is an opportunity to create a swimming pool environment that is more attractive and supportive to people with health conditions. In seeking to develop a Water Wellbeing Programme, it is proposed to work through the Accreditation Process advocated by Swim England. The steps involve undertaking a self-assessment Environmental Audit and prepare an action plan to improve accessibility and inclusivity were possible. This will serve to demonstrate that the Pool is committed to delivering a service which is accessible to people with health conditions and will involve the Council's Up and Active Team in providing individualised support.

An aquatic programme will then be developed based around existing and new offers made possible by training of staff; Facility operational, Exercise Referral instructors and swimming teachers. It is aimed to demonstrate impact and success through data collection around participants engaging in the aquatic programme and case studies that emerge.

6.2 LIFEGUARD COVER

The availability of sufficient reliable lifeguards and Swimming Teachers is crucial to the delivery of an aquatic programme of activity which the public can attend on a consistent and reliable basis. However, we continuously struggle to find enough cover to maintain the current programme to meet customer needs seek to work along with Swim England to overcome what is a national challenge for Swimming Pool operators.

6.3 UTILITY CHARGES

The increase in charges for Gas and electricity has necessitated a careful review of how we can keep consumption levels down to a minimum. Whilst many Swimming Pools are seriously facing closure, we have maintained the same programmes and implemented measures to save energy, such as a very slight reduction in water temperature across both Pools. However, satisfaction and attendance levels have been especially high during January as is normal.

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