

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

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meeting date: 22<sup>nd</sup> AUGUST 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 PLAY AREA IMPROVEMENTS

An order has now been placed for the planned 23/23 works to repair and renew the safety surfacing at play areas. Only two quotes were received rather than the required three, requiring an exemption being granted by the monitoring officer and 151 officer.

Work will take place this year and a further procurement exercise will be conducted for further work in 24/25.

The first work carried out was at Henthorn Road Play Area.

## 3 EV CHARGING POINTS AND SOLAR PANELS

There are charging points for EVs at Railway View and Chester Avenue car parks in Clitheroe. A study is now complete to assess the suitability of other car parks in the borough for EV charging points. This study has focused on electrical supplies to the relevant sites. The sites examined were Edisford, Sabden, Ribchester, Barclay Road Longridge, Dunsop Bridge, Slaidburn, and Chipping. The best electrical supplies are at Edisford and Longridge. Other more rural sites could prove very expensive as electrical supplies would require upgrading. The next stage is to talk to potential providers of EV charging points to seek firm proposals and costings. This is underway. We are also contacting the Energy Savings Trust to assess any additional funding that may be available to subsidise the schemes.

We have now received confirmation from the Electricity Network NW that we can connect solar panels at Council Offices to the national grid. This allows us to advance designs for installation and obtain costings for Councillors to consider.

#### 4 YOUNG PERSON'S CENTRE, LONGRIDGE

Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) have a lease agreement with Lancashire County Council to rent part of the Old Fire Station from RVBC. The annual rental is £10,000. The County Council deliver the young person's service from the site. Recently, due to heavy rainfall, there has been flooding of the property and the county council have temporarily relocated the service. The flooding is caused by a defective and inadequate valley gutter over-flowing into the building affecting not least the electrics. The existing slates need to be lifted, the roof needs to be felted and a larger valley gutter needs to be profiled and the existing slates need to be put back so that short storm bursts do not affect the building. This work will fall under the remit of Policy and Finance Committee and a report will be tabled in September to seek funding £35,000 for the work. Surveyors in communities will manage the work if agreed.

#### 5 RV3G

The process of allocating pitch space for the forthcoming season from September to April is underway. All the teams and those who book for informal/casual have been asked to submit their preferred usage for the season. We are aiming to meet as many of these requests as possible. Certain days and times are inevitably oversubscribed, e.g., Tuesday, and Thursday early evening, whilst Friday evening is not so popular. This is due to the proximity of the weekend games for the teams involved with the football leagues.

The process ensures that allocations for the pitches are as fair as possible and that we achieve maximum utilisation of the site. The original policy remains where the early evening slots are prioritised for younger players to avoid them having to play in the 8-10pm periods.

Clubs are learning how best to be flexible with the space allocated. For example on the main pitch, some clubs will split it into 6 zones for small-sided games and coaching to maximise their time and value for their hire periods.

The facility continues to prove more popular each season and there is a long term objective of adding another 3G pitch in the borough. The Playing Pitch Strategy is underway and will be finalised in March 2024, following essential winter surveys. An interim update will be provided to members in November. In parallel to this study being completed, we are talking to the Football Foundation and FA about support for an additional pitch.

The interest to hold a BTec course is now coming to fruition and a report is on the agenda of this meeting regarding this. If agreed the proposal will see greater usage of the pitches and education room at quiet times and also bring local Btec provision to young people in the valley.

The lines on the pitches were repainted in August by a specialist contractor in readiness for the season. This along with the day to day maintenance Council staff carry out, ensures that the facility continues to be one of the best of its type in the

North-West, which often receives very positive comments from players visiting from outside of the Borough.

## 6 RIBBLESDALE POOL

The Council recently submitted a bid to the Sport England support fund, which is a national scheme that will allocate £20m across England to Local Authority run pools to assist with the substantial increase in running costs because of the rise in utility costs.

The fund is aimed at pools at imminent risk of closure and is relatively small when considered that there are 2000 pools in England. It is important to apply for funding but following discussions with Sport England, we would not be considered a priority. We will hear in November if we have been successful.

The Council has been successful in obtaining £5k from Sport England to carry out an energy study at the pool. This has identified a number of upgrades which will save energy and which will payback investment in a short time. The necessary works have been agreed under the Invest to save funding and will take place as soon as possible.

## 7 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

Council staff continue to consider how the biodiversity of the open spaces can be improved and have increased the amount of wild meadows at the Castle and at Edisford riverbank. This entails increased planting of wildflowers and a reduction of mowing.

Currently Ribble Valley do not have any Green Flag parks. We are actively seeking to achieve the first Green Flag for the Castle in 2024. A report on this will be brought to committee at a later date.

Planning section are responsible for tree safety, however removing dangerous trees does impact community services. As part of a rolling programme of tree risk assessment all trees that come under the jurisdiction of the Council are being assessed to ascertain their true condition and the level of risk they may pose to life and property. This will ensure that the level of safety complies with the HSE's criteria for trees in the public domain and although a growing number of ash are succumbing to ash die back the Councils tree-scape is diverse enough to withstand the impact of the disease.

Therefore, the Councils' tree cover will be continually changing as dead/dangerous trees are removed on safety grounds and supplementary planting is implemented, however the planned approach to managing the Councils' arboreal infrastructure will ensure that existing and new trees will continue to make a contribution to biological carbon sequestration.

Further tree planting is being progressed in partnership with the Ribble Rivers Trust.

## 8 RIBBLE VALLEY IN BLOOM GRANTS

The grants panel considered and approved several applications for grants from Parish Councils and Town Councils to help with the cost of work associated with planting and providing flower arrangements. The total value of the grants was £1330, and the sums

awarded ranged from £40 to £500. There were more applications this year than previous years which resulted in more awards but of smaller amounts.

Grant awards had to be made following the borough elections which was later than desirable. This has led to many groups using the funding for winter bedding rather than summer bedding.

## 9 ARTS DEVELOPMENT

### 9.1 CLITHEROE CONTEMPORARY ARTS FESTIVAL 8 – 11TH JUNE 2023.

Working together with a variety of partners we aimed to develop a new annual Arts Festival for the area. This resulted in the first Contemporary Arts festival taking place in June. It was a major success and it is hoped this will become an annual event.

We raised £25,524 of funding, had 64 backers and created the whole event in just in just 63 days. We engaged 30 volunteers, brought together over 1000 art enthusiasts created 9 exhibitions and started one social enterprise.

Clitheroe was filled with art exhibitions, art classes, educational events, opportunities to see artists at work, live music, art films, performance, and fringe events. From Holmes Mill to The Castle, the town came alive with something for everyone.

An army of yellow clad volunteers helped direct over 1,000 enthusiastic visitors over the weekend.

The festival began on Friday evening with a private view at Holmes Mill's Cotton Room hosting over 200 invited guests and sponsors and culminated with an awards evening at the Bistro, Bar and Grill again at Holmes Mill with Blackburn artist Mark Edmundson taking home the £500 plein air painting prize, with Whalley's Anthony Platt being awarded £100 for the best in show for his painting of Slaidburn in the Open Event.

The event was the brainchild of six art enthusiasts and local entrepreneurs who are on a mission to fanfare the creative talents of the Ribble Valley and beyond. Their collaboration successfully secured funding from Crowdfund Lancashire's Culture and Sport Fund. This funding was then matched by the generosity of local businesses such as James' Places, Fort Vale Engineering, who supported all the educational elements of the festival, Collins White Tile Importers and Backhouse Insurance.

The festival has already left behind its first legacy piece, with a wall mural by Preston artist Gavin Renshaw depicting the railways being brought to Clitheroe, outside Longitude Art Gallery off Castlegate. The festival plans to leave a permanent piece of artwork or sculpture for Clitheroe every year that it is held. Plans for 2024 are already underway with a desire to broaden the festival further next year and put it on the Clitheroe festival calendar for years to come. To see all that happened over the weekend see [www.clitheroecontemporary.co.uk](http://www.clitheroecontemporary.co.uk) Facebook @Clitheroe Contemporary Arts Festival Instagram @ccartsfestival

### 9.2 ARTWALK CLITHEROE 8TH OCTOBER

6 Clitheroe galleries are teaming up to open to the public from 11 am - 4pm. Each unique space will offer something different for the visitors. The ArtWalk venues are Longitude Gallery, Knowle Top Studios, Stewards Gallery, Nicky Litchfield, Platform Gallery, Atelier Arts.

## 10 PLATFORM GALLERY

- 10.1 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:

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 & Cornwall factions to Clitheroe for the Summer.

Northern Star – The return of our annual winter exhibition. 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.

The Mix – Platform Gallery's flexible space available for hire by the community. A broad mixture of events are happening in this space over the next few months, art and craft fairs, solo artist exhibitions including print and sound artist Anita Burrows, printmaking workshops & craft stalls.

British Textile Biennale - An exhibition in The Mix that promotes the sustainability of wool fleece, highlighting the current situation with local farmers and the production of wool. A show to compliment the theme of the textiles festival happening in neighbouring boroughs, looking at the environmental and human costs of the textile industry.

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