We’re officially one of the UK’s hidden gems

Ribble Valley has the best rural quality of life in the North West a top survey has revealed.

And Clitheroe is the eighth best market town in which to live in the UK according to a national newspaper.

Residents of Ribble Valley enjoy the best quality of life of any rural area in the North West, according to the 2015 Halifax Rural Areas Quality of Life Survey.

The survey took a wide range of factors into account, including crime rates, employment, school results, broadband access, health and wellbeing, life expectancy and the weather!

Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Stuart Hirst (pictured) said: “These results reveal what we have always known, that Ribble Valley is one of the UK’s hidden gems.

“All of this is down to elected members, who draw upon many diverse talents, a committed senior management team and a loyal and dedicated workforce.

“We are delighted with these results and might have fared even better in the survey had it not been for the weather!”

The survey found that southern areas tended to receive higher ratings for weekly earnings and the weather, while northern areas scored better on education, lower house prices in relation to earnings, lower traffic flows and population densities.

Ribble Valley is the safest place in Lancashire and one of the safest in the UK, with around 28 crimes recorded annually for every 1,000 residents, which is significantly below the national average and the lowest in Lancashire.

The borough is also one of the UK’s premier food destinations and in September will host Stage 2 of the Aviva Tour of Britain, the UK’s largest free-to-spectate sporting event.

Clitheroe was also recently placed eighth in the UK’s Top 10 Market Towns by the Times newspaper, while Whalley was named one of the Top 10 Places to Live in the UK by the Sunday Times.
Council tax frozen for the sixth year running

Ribble Valley Borough Council has announced a council tax freeze without cuts in jobs or services for the sixth year running. The council has frozen its 2015/16 council tax without the need for compulsory redundancies or service cuts, despite a 14 per cent reduction in Government grants. Support for charities and voluntary organisations will also be maintained.

Ribble Valley Borough Council’s share of the council tax on a Band D property remains at £140.69, the lowest in Lancashire and one of the lowest in the country.

Council leader Stuart Hirst praised the dedication and hard work of council staff and councillors for delivering efficient and cost-effective services in difficult times. He said: “I am delighted that Ribble Valley’s share of the council tax has been frozen and core services protected for the sixth successive year. “This has been achieved despite a reduction in core Government funding of 14 per cent, a total of 40 per cent since 2010. “Ribble Valley has the lowest council tax in Lancashire and one of the lowest in the country – a significant achievement built on many years of careful financial planning.

“I am grateful to councillors and staff for their dedication and commitment in continuing to deliver efficient and cost-effective services, while maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction.”

Councillor’s message

We’re back, but the challenges still remain

The General Election of 2015 will be memorable for many reasons and not least for its astonishing and unforeseen outcome. Not only were the predictions of the pollsters confounded, but the victory of the SNP in Scotland was a political vote-face of seismic proportions.

In Ribble Valley, which hosted national and local elections for the first time in 20 years, the ruling Conservative administration was returned with an increased majority. I would like to thank residents for their ongoing confidence in our ability to build on past successes and extend a warm welcome to the newly elected councillors of all political colours.

By any assessment Ribble Valley is a high performing council, with a record of nationally recognised achievements over the last four years that compares with the best performing authorities in the country. While acknowledging what has been achieved, the new council is now looking to address the serious challenges that lie ahead.

Over the forthcoming year, we will have to balance the budget for 2016/17, despite further inevitable grant cuts. We want to see the contract for the Clitheroe Market re-development signed and ready to go, and we will be building on the success of the borough’s Core Strategy, by completing the land allocations work.

In the longer term, sweeping changes to local government in England have been given legislative flesh in the Queen’s Speech, which will speed up the process of devolution to our city region combined authorities.

The Northern Powerhouse is a growing reality, as is the stark reality that Lancashire is currently well behind the curve of our metropolitan neighbours in Manchester and Liverpool.

We should embrace these changes as an opportunity, not a problem, and seek to build a leadership role for Ribble Valley. As such, not only will we have an equal say at the top table, but will secure that other paramount objective for the long term – the preservation of the independence of Ribble Valley and the end to calls for our abolition within a unitary ‘super council’ in East Lancashire.

I have no doubt that this will be the emphatic wish of residents throughout Ribble Valley.

Free advice on renovation of listed buildings

FREE preliminary advice on the care, repair and renovation of listed buildings is available to Ribble Valley residents.

And residents are warned that putting their stamp on listed buildings without permission can cost them dearly or land them in jail.

Anyone buying a listed building is acquiring a piece of the country’s national heritage, as well as a new home, so it’s vital they understand what they are taking on before they start knocking it about.

Carrying out unauthorised alterations to a listed building is a criminal offence that can lead to costly restoration work, court fines and even imprisonment.

But help is at hand thanks to free advice from the borough council on the care, repair and restoration of listed buildings.

Sue Bibby, chairman of Ribble Valley Borough Council’s planning and development committee, said: “Historic buildings are an important aspect of the character and appearance of our towns, villages and countryside.

“Conservationists and planners have a duty to protect the built environment and if you look around Ribble Valley you can see just what a good job they have been doing.

“Well-informed advice is a premium and the key is to work with planners from the outset, which can save a lot of heartache and expense down the line. Our officers are just a phone call away.”

The free advice is also available to workmen who have been asked to undertake work on what they suspect might be a listed building.

Further details are available from Ribble Valley Borough council on 01200 425111.

Market revamp moves closer to completion

The proposed redevelopment of Clitheroe Market took a step closer this week after the shortlist of six potential developers was reduced to two.

Research into the viability of a redevelopment of the market site was presented to Ribble Valley Borough Council last year.

The selection of a development partner in line with the council’s procurement procedures started and a shortlist of six potential developers was drawn up.

Now the shortlist has been reduced to two, who were due to make their final submissions as Ribble Valley News went to press.

Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Stuart Hirst said: “This is a fantastic opportunity to bring modern retail and leisure facilities to Clitheroe town centre, and the proposed scheme has generated strong interest from developers across the country.

“Although only a small rural authority, the council has an excellent record of success, enjoying a level of customer satisfaction that is the envy of neighbouring authorities, as well as healthy reserves and one of the lowest council tax rates in the country.

“Along with hosting the Tour of Britain in September, the redevelopment of Clitheroe Market reflects the ambitious and confident way in which the council is promoting and developing the borough’s economic potential.”

Colin Hirst (pictured left), Ribble Valley Borough Council’s head of regeneration and housing, added: “The final submissions will be evaluated with a view to making a recommendation to the council’s policy and finance committee in September.

“We will then select a partner, who will work up a detailed scheme and submit a planning application for a retail-led mixed-use market development and car park.

“This is a fantastic opportunity to bring modern retail and leisure facilities to Clitheroe town centre, and the proposed scheme generated strong interest from developers across the country.

“We expect a planning application will be submitted and approved by next March, with work starting in the summer.

“We will be holding discussions with market tenants and businesses who may be affected by the proposed redevelopment over the coming months.”

Weber’s message

We’re back, but the challenges still remain

THE General Election of 2015 will be memorable for many reasons and not least for its astonishing and unforeseen outcome. Not only were the predictions of the pollsters confounded, but the victory of the SNP in Scotland was a political vote-face of seismic proportions.

In Ribble Valley, which hosted national and local elections for the first time in 20 years, the ruling Conservative administration was returned with an increased majority. I would like to thank residents for their ongoing confidence in our ability to build on past successes and extend a warm welcome to the newly elected councillors of all political colours.

By any assessment Ribble Valley is a high performing council, with a record of nationally recognised achievements over the last four years that compares with the best performing authorities in the country. While acknowledging what has been achieved, the new council is now looking to address the serious challenges that lie ahead.

Over the forthcoming year, we will have to balance the budget for 2016/17, despite further inevitable grant cuts. We want to see the contract for the Clitheroe Market re-development signed and ready to go, and we will be building on the success of the borough’s Core Strategy, by completing the land allocations work.

In the longer term, sweeping changes to local government in England have been given legislative flesh in the Queen’s Speech, which will speed up the process of devolution to our city region combined authorities.

The Northern Powerhouse is a growing reality, as is the stark reality that Lancashire is currently well behind the curve of our metropolitan neighbours in Manchester and Liverpool.

We should embrace these changes as an opportunity, not a problem, and seek to build a leadership role for Ribble Valley. As such, not only will we have an equal say at the top table, but will secure that other paramount objective for the long term – the preservation of the independence of Ribble Valley and the end to calls for our abolition within a unitary ‘super council’ in East Lancashire.

I have no doubt that this will be the emphatic wish of residents throughout Ribble Valley.
New homeowners are urged to travel by rail

A WELCOME pack promoting local rail transport could prove just the ticket for new homeowners in Ribble Valley.

The pack, devised by Community Rail Lancashire and supported by Ribble Valley Borough Council, features a host of information and advice, including train timetables, local rail history, a Rail Ramblers guided walks programme and how to get involved in local rail support groups.

Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Stuart Hirst said: “Ribble Valley is a happening place. It is one of the most desirable places in which to live and work in the UK, with a reputation for fine food and great days out.

“We want people to visit the borough and what better way to enjoy our stunning scenery than travelling by train.

“We also want the borough’s new homeowners to make the most of rail travel in their daily commutes to Blackburn, Preston, Manchester and beyond, as well as enjoy the leisure opportunities that local rail travel has to offer.”

Marjorie Birch, vice-chairman of the Clitheroe Community Rail Partnership and chairman of local support group Ribble Valley Rail, added: “Lancashire’s community railways provide an excellent means by which to explore the county and provide vital links for students and commuters travelling travelling across the region.

“There has been an increase in the use of local rail services in recent years, particularly the Clitheroe to Manchester rail line, and we anticipate further increases in passenger traffic in the future.

“Improvements will be taking place this year to all four Ribble Valley rail stations as part of the major scheme upgrade for the Clitheroe to Manchester line, including the provision of real-time information screens and new passenger waiting shelters.

“Through joint initiatives with Northern Rail and other partners, excellent value tickets are available that help travelers go a bit further for their money, and now these packs are bringing comprehensive information to the doorsteps of potential new rail users.”

The packs are being distributed to new homeowners by housing sales offices.

Success on a plate for community groups

A TASTY £800 is on the menu for Ribble Valley community groups looking to start or improve luncheon clubs.

The money can be used to start a new club, develop an existing one by buying new crockery or cookware, or providing activities. It can also be used to support other projects that engage older residents on a regular basis, such as coffee mornings and afternoon teas.

Luncheon clubs, sometimes called lunch clubs, provide older people with the opportunity to socialise over a regular hot nutritious meal.

They can have a membership of a few up to dozens and operate in a range of venues, such as pubs, restaurants, community or church halls.

Ribble Valley Borough Council’s partnership officer, Dilys Day, said: “Luncheon clubs keep older people engaged in local life, giving them a sense of involvement and belonging.

“They provide an essential service in rural areas, by offering a friendly meeting place for those who cannot readily leave their village and consequently suffer isolation and loneliness.

“They also help in the identification of underlying problems that may contribute to a decline in health, thus helping to make the lives of older residents safer and healthier.”

The popular Mellor Luncheon Club has been meeting at the Mellor Methodist Church Hall for 10 years and receives annual funding from Ribble Valley Borough Council.

An enthusiastic team of volunteer cooks and helpers serve a hot two-course meal made from fresh local produce followed by tea or coffee every Friday.

For just £4, participants can enjoy a range of dishes, including salmon hollandaise with new potatoes and vegetables, followed by peaches and cream, or a club favourite, sausage casserole with Yorkshire pudding.

Cook Jean Walmsley said: “We have about 16 members, who really look forward to attending. They don’t just receive a hot meal, but get to socialise, too.”

Mellor chairman Stella Brunskill added: “The Mellor Luncheon Club is an invaluable part of village life and the committed team of volunteers who run it to be congratulated for providing such an essential and much-loved service.”

Community groups interested in starting or improving a lunch club are invited to a meeting in the Ribble Valley Borough Council Chamber in Church Street, Clitheroe, on Thursday, September 17, from 10.30am to noon.

Further details are available from Dilys Day on 01200 425111.

Health service champ is our new mayor

A FORMER health service director and public health champion is Ribble Valley’s new mayor.

Born and brought up a stone’s throw from the famous Giant’s Causeway in Northern Ireland, Bridget Hilton trained as a nurse and midwife at Birch Hill Hospital in Rochdale.

It was during midwifery training that Bridget witnessed the effect of poor social conditions on people’s health and wellbeing, which sparked a lifelong interest in public health.

Bridget then undertook further professional training at Bradford University, before working as a health visitor in South Kensington.

Two years later, she took up her first management post and spent the rest of her career in health sector management.

After working in London for 10 years, she moved to Guildford in Surrey and in 1981 took up a senior management post with the then Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley District Health Authority.

Following NHS reorganisation, she was appointed director of operational services at the newly-established Communicare NHS Trust, which became the Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Primary Care Trust in 1995, where Bridget was appointed executive director of service provision.

It was at her retirement presentation that former Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Chris Holtom suggested Bridget should stand as a borough councillor and she was duly elected to represent the Waddington and West Bradford in the local elections of 2003.

In 2013, Bridget was appointed chairman of Ribble Valley Borough Council’s health and housing committee and nominated to sit on the statutory health and wellbeing board at Lancashire County Council.

She has been a co-opted member of the county council’s health scrutiny committee since 2006.

Bridget has one adult son who lives and works in Manchester. Her mayress is Mrs Kathleen Hill and her chosen charities are Dementia Care and Macmillan Cancer Support, both for services in Ribble Valley.
How your vote shaped our borough

Ribble Valley Borough Council has a constitution, which sets out how the organisation operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that ensure those decisions are efficient, transparent and accountable.

Although the council’s day-to-day business is overseen by a corporate management team comprising chief executive Marشد Scott and two directors – chief finance officer Peter Pearson and community services director John Hargreaves – decisions made are by councillors via their committees, both statutory and non-statutory, that deal with issues ranging from health and housing to parks and leisure.

Meetings of all the committees are open to the public and members of the public are welcome to attend and will find a warm welcome, as well as the opportunity to speak, if a motion is required.

Residents wishing to speak or ask a question and requiring an immediate response are asked to contact the council’s committees services team at least two days before the meeting. Residents not requiring a response can contact the committee services team at least two days before the meeting.

Only Ribble Valley residents may speak or meetings are limited to three minutes and one person per agenda item. A meetings calendar and committee agendas are available at ribblevalley.gov.uk.

The council’s chief executive, Marشد Scott, is fit for capacity returning officer, said: “Staff in polling stations were extremely busy from 6am to 10pm, with those involved in the count continuing until past 1am, which is a 24-hour shift.

“It was a mammoth effort, with some staff back in work at 7am on Friday for the borough election count.

“It was a tremendous effort by all involved ensuring that local voters enjoyed an efficient, open and transparent election.”

Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Stuart Hirst said: “It is the first time since 1979 that the borough has administered three elections simultaneously, while placing a minimum amount of work on officers. I would like to commend the returning officer and his team for their magnificent efforts in helping to deliver an efficient and successful election.

“I would also like to thank all those who voted in all three elections that last happened in 1979.”

Ribble Valley went to the polls on Thursday, May 7, in a unique triple election.

It is the first time since 1979 that Ribble Valley has hosted Parliamentary, borough and parish elections simultaneously, and voters turned out in their droves.

Over 52,000 residents, nearly 68 per cent of the electorate, cast their votes at 83 polling stations across Ribble Valley and parts of South Ribble included in the Ribble Valley parliamentary constituency.

Council staff worked flat out for over 24 hours out to administer the triple election covering 23 parishes, 11 wards and one parliamentary constituency.

Read on to find out what became of your all-important vote and who your new councillor is.
LEISURE and fitness in Ribble Valley is top of the league thanks to Ribble Valley Borough Council.

From health schemes tailored to residents with specific needs, to cycling festivals for all the family, to the forthcoming Tour of Britain, sport and leisure in Ribble Valley is racing to success.

Nearly 5,000 residents have signed up to the council’s successful healthy lifestyles scheme since it started in 2001. The programme, run in conjunction with Public Health Lancashire and the East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group, offers a range of classes for people with specific health needs and enjoys a satisfaction rating of 97 per cent.

And as well as recently facilitating the first Ribble Valley Cycling Festival, the borough is also hosting Stage 2 of the 2015 Aviva Tour of Britain, the UK’s biggest free-to-spectate sporting event, on Monday, September 7, one of the biggest events in the borough’s 40-year history.

Read on to find out why sport and leisure in Ribble Valley is in a league of its own.

Tai chi to help those with mobility issues

Ribble Valley Borough Council has joined forces with a local tai chi expert to offer courses in the ancient art for residents with mobility or balance problems.

Tai chi, which originates from ancient China, is famed for its health benefits and can help improve posture and flexibility, strengthen muscles and joints and reduce pain and stress.

Recent research suggests its straightforward, slow-moving and coordinated exercises can reduce the risk of falls among older people by improving balance, strength, flexibility and mobility, as well as calming the mind.

Regular practice of tai chi can help people move, stand, balance and walk with greater confidence through a greater understanding and sensitivity of the body.

The council’s healthy lifestyles team has been delivering tai chi for a number of years, but has now joined forces with Clitheroe tai chi expert Bill Wilkinson to offer 12-week courses aimed specifically at residents with mobility or balance problems.

Bill has been practising Chen-style tai chi, the oldest and original form of tai chi, for over 20 years. He shares our philosophy that people, no matter what their age or ability, can benefit from tai chi.

“We plan to start a class initially for our healthy lifestyle clients struggling with mobility and balance, and if successful the scheme will be expanded and continued.”

Around 30 per cent of adults aged over 65 and living at home will experience at least one fall a year, rising to 50 per cent of adults aged over 80. Most falls do not result in serious injury, but five per cent do, such as broken bones.

Tracy Balko added: “Falls are usually more serious and expensive to manage in the elderly, due to the cost of in-patient and residential care.

“They can also have an adverse psychological impact on sufferers, who can lose confidence, become withdrawn and feel as if they have lost their independence.

“Tai chi can help those at risk improve their strength, balance and confidence, and we are delighted to be working with Bill Wilkinson on this new initiative.

The course is open to residents with balance and mobility issues by referral from their GP or health professional and further details are available from Tracy Balko on 01200 425111.

Bikers saddle up for area’s first cycling festival

Over 2,000 cycling enthusiasts got on their bikes for the first Ribble Valley Cycling Festival.

The festival, coordinated and funded by Ribble Valley Borough Council, featured a host of activities, including family bike rides, a pop-up velodrome, a bike-powered concert and an evening with cycling celebrity Ned Boulting.

The festival started with a free bike clinic, giveaways and refreshments, in the Ribble Valley Borough Council Car Park.

There was a bike-powered concert featuring Good Foxy, The Ragamuffins and The Remedy at the Clitheroe Castle Bandstand that attracted a 600-strong crowd and a mini-velodrome at the Edisford Road Car Park that attracted over 200 participants.

The council’s sports development officer, Peter Fletcher, said: “We are delighted with how the festival went and the excitement it created has been fantastic. It attracted over 2,000 participants over the course of the week and gave us a great platform on which to build in the future.”

The festival was a prelude to the 2015 Aviva Tour of Britain, which will see 20 of the world’s top cycling teams power through Ribble Valley from Clitheroe to Colne via the Nick o’ Pendle, Whalley, Longridge, Dunsop Bridge and Forest of Bowland on Monday, September 7.
A NEW three-bedroom home in Ribble Valley for less than £70,000 might sound far-fetched, but exactly that is up for grabs thanks to the borough council.
The council has joined forces with developers and housing associations to tackle the borough’s shortage of affordable homes.
House prices in Ribble Valley are way above the national average – a modest family home now costs around 10 times the average salary – and first-time buyers are being forced out of the communities their families have lived in for generations.
There is also a chronic shortage of accommodation for young single people and the elderly.
Shared ownership houses can cost as little as £68,000 for a 40 per cent share, with around £235 rent on the remainder, while rented properties are available from as little as £340 a month.
Read on to find out how Ribble Valley Borough Council has the key to the door for the local residents with the most pressing housing needs.

A helping hand for our young homeless

HELP is at hand for young homeless people in Ribble Valley thanks to a collaboration between the borough council, Clitheroe Christians in Partnership and YMCA Blackburn.
The three organisations have joined forces to purchase and run a house in Clitheroe town centre that will be used as supported accommodation for young homeless people taking their first step into independent living.
According to Government figures, 52 per cent of homeless people are under 25 and one in 100 young people will experience homelessness in their lifetime, usually due to family breakdown.
Homeless young people have poorer mental and physical health than their peers, are more likely to have alcohol or drug problems and many are not in education, employment or training, purely because of their homelessness.
Ribble Valley Borough Council’s housing strategy manager, Rachael Stott, said: “The provision of housing for the young and elderly is one of the biggest challenges facing the

Affordable homes up for grabs in Barrow

TWENTY-EIGHT affordable homes will be up for grabs in Barrow by local residents from October.
The two and three-bedroom houses will be available on a shared ownership or affordable rented basis at the former Pendle Garage site, now called Barleyfields.
Barleyfields is being developed by North West housing association Great Places Housing Group and affordable home ownership company Plumlife in partnership with Ribble Valley Borough Council.
Shared ownership allows residents to buy from 35 to 75 per cent of a new home and pay rent on the remainder, with the option of increasing their share as their circumstances change.
The council’s housing strategy manager, Rachael Stott, said: “We are delighted to have supported this excellent scheme, which will make much-needed high-quality rental and shared ownership properties available to residents with a local connection.”
Tom Johnson, neighbourhood coordinator for East Lancashire at Great Places Housing Group, added: “Ribble Valley residents struggling to get onto the property ladder will be delighted with what’s on offer at Barleyfields, which will provide new high-quality affordable family homes in a desirable area, where the need for such properties is high.”
The provision of affordable housing is one of the biggest challenges facing Ribble Valley Borough Council, which is working closely with housing partners to address the problem.
Ribble Valley Borough Council is at the forefront of several housing initiatives, from the provision of affordable properties in partnership with the housing sector to cutting-edge energy efficiency.

Keeping the elderly safe in their homes

ELDERLY residents in Ribble Valley can live more safely and comfortably in their own homes thanks to a partnership between the borough council and home improvement charity Homewise.
Homewise offers a host of advice, support and assistance, including protection from rip-off contractors and a handyman service for a small charge plus materials, or in some cases free.
The scheme offers comprehensive advice on all aspects of home improvements, adaptation, repairs and maintenance, a list of trusted tradesmen, assistance with raising funds to pay for work, energy-efficiency grants and subsidies, recycled disability aids, a free security scheme for residents over 60 and the provision and installation of low-energy light bulbs for residents over 70.
Homewise staff are trained by Lancashire Constabulary to provide crime prevention advice, undertake security surveys of homes, provide and install security measures to doors and windows, and anti-distraction burglary kits to help residents tackle unscrupulous door-to-door salesmen and rogue traders.
They also make referrals to the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service for fire safety checks and advice on the installation of smoke alarms.
The council’s housing strategy manager, Rachael Stott, said: “Ribble Valley has an above average number of elderly residents and we are working hard to address their specific housing needs, thereby helping them live independently and safely in their homes.
“Homewise can offer a wealth of housing advice and support to elderly residents, as well as protect them from the rip-off tactics of unscrupulous contractors”
Sue Sinclair, manager Homewise, added: “We are delighted to be offering our service to elderly residents in Ribble Valley and while we may not be able to solve every problem we will certainly do our best to try”
For further information contact Homewise on 01254 232249 or Ribble Valley Borough Council’s housing team on 01200 425111.
Take the plunge with Swimtag

Ribble Valley residents are invited to take the plunge in a free new fitness scheme currently making waves across the country.

Ribblesdale Pool in Clitheroe is to host Swimtag, which offers swimmers analytical data via a unique wristband.

The Swimtag wristband feeds detailed information from a swimming session to a dedicated website, featuring a profile page with a colour-coded graph outlining average pace, rest times and stroke rates.

The page also includes a swim summary, personal best, training plan progression and information from the user’s swimming pool.

Colin Winterbottom, Ribble Valley Borough Council’s culture and leisure services manager, said: “A gentle swim can burn over 200 calories in half an hour and a fast front crawl can burn as many calories as an eight-mile run.

“Swimming can support up to ninety per cent of the body’s weight in water, meaning those with disabilities, injuries or illnesses, such as arthritis, can also take part in sport in a comfortable and safe environment.

“Swimtag is a valuable aid to swimmers by motivating and encouraging them to reach their goals, and it’s free.”

A recent survey has revealed that 52 per cent of swimmers had been motivated by using Swimtag and 62 per cent said it had helped them improve their swimming.

Further details about Swimtag are available from Ribblesdale Pool on 01200 424825.

2015: ‘an exciting year for tourism’

DAYTRIPPERS and weekenders are flocking to Ribble Valley in their droves, latest figures have revealed.

And Ribble Valley Borough Council has published its 2015 visitor guide, Discover Ribble Valley.

The new-look guide was redesigned in a coffee table magazine style two years’ ago, following consultation with customers and advertisers. It has been a great success, doubling in size from previous editions and attracting significant interest.

This year’s guide features sections on food, shopping, heritage, outdoor activities, particularly cycling and walking; weddings, the arts, a What’s On and comprehensive accommodation listings.

It also features recipes from top local chefs Gareth Bevan of Food by Breda Murphy and Ryan Greene of the Foxfields Country Hotel, Billington.

Ribble Valley Borough Council’s tourism and events officer, Tom Pridmore, said: “2015 is an exciting year for tourism in Ribble Valley, which is hosting Stage 2 of this year’s Tour of Britain and, as well as being a premier food destination, is now an emerging wedding destination.

“Discover Ribble Valley focuses on businesses with a real story to tell offering authentic visitor experiences around the themes of food, outdoor pursuits and weddings.

“The guide has been very well received since undergoing a revamp and demand for it is increasing year-on-year.”

According to national figures, visitor numbers in Ribble Valley increased by 1.6 per cent in 2012, from 3.6million to 3.66million, with an increase in tourism spend of 4.4 per cent, from £169.6million to £177.1million.

Ribble Valley Borough Council spearheaded the multi-award-winning Ribble Valley Food Trail, is a principal partner in the Clitheroe Food Festival and is at the forefront of Ribble Valley Wedding Heaven, a partnership between the council and 15 venues licensed for marriage ceremonies and civil partnerships aimed at promoting the borough as a premier wedding destination.

Discover Ribble Valley has been distributed to tourism exhibitions and visitor information centres across the UK.

It is also available from the Visitor Information Centre and Platform Gallery in Station Road, Clitheroe (01200 425566).

A new-look Freedom card!

SPRITHTLY silvers and servicemen and women in Ribble Valley can grab a gym-swim membership for just £21 per month.

Ribble Valley Borough Council has joined forces with Ribblesdale Pool and Roefield Leisure Centre to offer a new-look Freedom card.

The card now offers unlimited daytime classes and gym access at Roefield Leisure Centre in Clitheroe, along with unlimited swimming at nearby Ribblesdale Pool.

Classes include Pilates, tai chi, aqua aerobics and stretch clinic, as well as active life and circuit sessions.

The Freedom card is also available to residents in receipt of income support benefits.

Further details are available from Ribblesdale Pool on 01200 424825.
Ribble Valley is to co-host one of the country’s biggest sporting events in the UK on Monday, September 7.

The world’s top cyclists and tens of thousands of spectators will descend on Ribble Valley and Pendle for Stage 2 of the 2015 Aviva Tour of Britain.

Stage 2 will see 20 of the world’s top cycling teams, including Olympic and world champions, and Tour de France stage winners, power through Ribble Valley and Pendle from Clitheroe to Colne.

It is one of the most significant projects to be undertaken by Ribble Valley Borough Council in its 40-year history, reflecting the ambitious and confident way in which the council is promoting and developing the area’s economic potential.

There will be significant benefits from the tens of thousands of spectators expected to descend on the two boroughs for the event, bringing with them an economic boost of around £3 million.

The event will be broadcast internationally by 16 television channels across 139 territories in Europe, Australia and the USA. ITV will screen three hours of live coverage every day and a one-hour highlights programme at night.

Join us in giving the elite cyclists, their teams and visitors a warm Ribble Valley welcome.
STAGE 2 of the 2015 Aviva Tour of Britain will showcase some of Ribble Valley’s most breathtaking scenery.

The race starts in Castle Street, Clitheroe, at the foot of the town’s historic Norman castle, before heading for the first King of the Mountains at the Nick o’ Pendle via Barrow, Wiswell and Pendleton. The race will head towards Clitheroe, where the riders will turn right into King Street and head for the famous hairy bend opposite the Judge Walmsley pub in Bilsborrow which will bring the cyclists to a near standstill.

The race will then wind through Whitewell, Clitheroe, Darwen and Skelmersdale Common – the site of the race’s first sprint – before crossing the A59 into Ribbleton, then heading for Longridge.

The cyclists will power through the创新 of Longridge, before heading for Chipping via Hujugsholm Road. After Chipping, the race will take in the delightful scenery, including Whitewell, Dunlop Bridge, Newton-in-Bolerdand and Slaidburn.

From there, the race heads for the borough of Pendle via Gisburn and the A6, where a magnificent view of the Ribble Valley, including Whalley and Woodhouses, will be on display. The route then heads for the second King of the Mountains at Darwen, before the second King of the Mountains at Darwen.

The race then heads for the third King of the Mountains at Darwen, before continuing to Whalley, where the cyclists will turn right into King Street and head for the second sprint, powering down Clitheroe Road for the last of the Stage 2 sprints, before climbing Clitheroe and crossing Whalley for a second time, before the final stretch to the finish in Colne, via Read, Stonnall, Prince and Nelson.

Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Stuart Hirst said: “This is going to be a must-see event for local people and visitors.

“Clitheroe weaving through the Class I and II-roads are the ideal setting for a spectacular day out, and we look forward to not only the stage itself being televised on the flight map and television audience, so is the ideal showcase for Ribble Valley’s many tourist attractions.

But stunning countryside is not Ribble Valley’s only claim to fame, as Tour of Britain spectators will discover.

The borough is one of the UK’s premier destinations for food and drink, award-winning independent retailers, walking and cycling, and is a popular wedding destination.

The Tour of Britain attracts a huge following, as well as international television audiences, so it is the ideal showcase for Ribble Valley’s many tourist attractions.

I would encourage our towns and villages to get involved in what I have no doubt will be a truly spectacular and landmark event.

I am very proud to thank our partners and sponsors for helping us host Stage 2 of the 2015 Aviva Tour of Britain and look forward to welcoming the riders to our borough, their teams and visitors a week Ribble Valley Mayor Bridget Hilton.

Stuart Hirst, Leader, Ribble Valley Borough Council

Log on to the dedicated Tour website

A DEDICATED Stage 2 website has been launched featuring a host of information for cycling enthusiasts and residents looking to keep abreast of the Tour of Britain.

The website, rbtour2015.co.uk, is available.

There is also a dedicated email address, rbtour2015@ribblevalley.gov.uk, for residents with specific concerns about the event, such as parking or road closures, or to request further information.

As Ribble Valley News went to press, spectator zones had been finalised for the Judge Walmsley in Bilsborrow, Whalley Arms at Whalley and Whalley Arms in the Nick o’ Pendle, but others are under negotiation and will be published as soon as details become available.

The 2015 Aviva Tour of Britain starts in Beaumaris, Anglesey, on Sunday, September 6.

The first winner of the Tour of Britain was Frenchman Robert Duvall in 1985, when the race was known as the Marathon.

Since the race was rebadged the Tour of Britain in 2004, the only British winner has been Sir Bradley Wiggins riding for Team Sky in 2013.

The Tour of Britain has four jerseys that are handed out to the best cyclists in distinct disciplines, the most coveted being the yellow jersey, which is given to the leading overall rider.
Saddle up for summer as activities get under way

AS tour fever wheels into Ribble Valley, local youngsters are invited to get on their bikes for a host of summer activities.

Ribble Valley Borough Council has launched its 2015 summer activities booklet listing six weeks of sports, arts and crafts for youngsters.

The courses, being offered in conjunction with Lancashire County Council, the Grand and the Ribble Valley Children’s Trust, will take place at venues throughout the borough, including village halls, primary schools, libraries, the Ribble Valley Tennis Centre, Longridge Sports and Arts Centre, Platform Gallery and Visitor Information Centre, the Grand, Roefield Leisure Centre, Ribblesdale Pool and Clitheroe Castle Museum.

The 24-page booklet features dozens of activities on offer over the summer months, including archery, arts and crafts, body zorbing, climbing, dance and drama, football, netball, orienteering, singing, storytelling, street dance, skateboarding and swimming.

Ribble Valley Borough Council’s sports development officer, Peter Fletcher, said: “This year’s summer activities booklet is the most comprehensive yet, featuring a bumper crop of activities for young people.

“From body zorbing to zumba, there’s no need for boredom in Ribble Valley during the summer months, and with Tour fever expected to wheel into the borough towards the end of August there’s never been a better time to get out and get active.

“We are grateful to the fantastic venues and dedicated volunteers, who have joined forces to make these activities possible.”

The booklet is available from the Ribble Valley Borough Council Offices in Church Walk, Clitheroe, or ribblevalley.gov.uk.

Half-price orienteering maps during Tour

AN orienteering course at Clitheroe Castle could prove just the ticket for families over the summer months.

And maps for the popular course are up for grabs for half price over Tour weekend.

Orienteering, the outdoor adventure sport that exercises the mind and body, is gaining popularity across the UK.

The aim is to navigate in sequence between points marked on a map. It does not matter how young, old or fit you are, as you can run, walk or jog the course at your own pace.

The Clitheroe Castle course has several routes ranging from easy with seven points to difficult with 16 points, including a route that is fully accessible with eight points.

The course covers the whole of the castle grounds and takes in many well-known features and some that are not so well-known.

Ribble Valley Borough Council’s sports development officer, Peter Fletcher, said: “Orienteering is a great sport for runners, joggers and walkers who want to improve their navigation skills, or for anyone who loves the outdoors.

“It is suitable for all ages and fitness levels, families, the elderly and those with restricted mobility, and anyone who wants to get more active, as well as groups and team-building.

“The castle grounds and parkland are rich and varied, and a fantastic venue for orienteering.”

Maps costing £2 are available from the Clitheroe Visitor Information Centre, or £1 during Tour of Britain weekend, Saturday, September 5, and Sunday, September 6.