

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 13 JANUARY 2015
title: GENERAL REPORT
submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: MARK BEVERIDGE, HEAD OF CULTURAL & LEISURE SERVICES
TOM PRIDMORE, TOURISM & EVENTS OFFICER
COLIN WINTERBOTTOM, LEISURE & SPORTS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
KATHERINE RODGER, ARTS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

1 PURPOSE

To update Committee on the Open Spaces Working Group, and the Cultural & Leisure Services section.

2 OPEN SPACES WORKING GROUP

- 2.1 The group has met on two occasions recently to consider a draft proposal from council officers which is being prepared to enable contributions from developers in the Borough to be sought for sport and leisure facilities. The premise for this is that, with each new development constructed more households are created in the Borough. The people living in these houses, in turn, place a greater pressure upon the existing sport and leisure facilities as they do upon schools and other services. Consequently, it seems reasonable that there is a contribution sought which will contribute to the existing and, where appropriate, new infrastructure. The contribution levels sought will not provide for a significant building programme of facilities, but primarily address some of the existing shortcomings which have been identified, and activity areas which will face greater demand in the future from a larger population.
- 2.2 The Open Spaces Working Groups has considered two drafts to date of the proposals that have been drawn up by officers, the objective being to arrive at a point where the draft can be considered by Community Services Committee. It was envisaged that this work would have been reported to the January meeting. However, a recent change to planning guidance has delayed the work. Officers are seeking further clarification of the guidance that has been issued, to be able to see what impact this will have on the proposals that have been considered this far by the Open Spaces Working Group.
- 2.3 Currently, it is expected that this clarification from civil servants will be received during January 2015, thus enabling the Borough draft proposal on this matter to be considered once more by the Open Spaces Working Group, and then be tabled at a future Community Services Committee.

3 WEDDING PARTNERSHIP LAUNCH

- 3.1 Ribble Valley boasts a large number of licenced venues, each of which is experiencing growing interest, with more and more couples coming to the area from across UK and particularly from cities like Manchester and London.

In recognition of this growth in interest, and new venues planned, the Council has brought together operators from licenced wedding venues to form a new partnership which will work collaboratively to further develop the reputation of the area as 'the' place to get married. The formation of the partnership was celebrated at a special launch on Lancashire Day, Thursday 27 November 2014, which achieved significant regional and local publicity.

- 3.2 The partnership, where wedding venues are working together to promote the whole area for weddings, is believed to be the first in the country. For Ribble Valley, it is not only about the venues, as there is much more that is attracting would-be brides and grooms to the area. In addition to a stunning range of licenced wedding venues, there are also beautiful historic churches in picturesque towns and villages, and even a castle. The area also boasts a range of artistic and creative suppliers, with a wealth of talent to ensure each wedding is tailor-made and special. There is also an abundance of accommodation to support the event, from luxury hotels to self-catering cottages, as well as camping and caravan sites.

The Council recognises the economic importance and future potential of wedding tourism, the value of which goes way beyond the direct income generation to wedding venues and specialist wedding services. The impact of wedding guests staying, dining, and shopping in the area is significant.

- 3.3 Moreover, the steady stream of guests, as first time visitors to the area, offers valuable opportunities for repeat tourism visits, and evidence from tourism businesses in this area suggest that this is already happening. Weddings, therefore, provide a fantastic shop front opportunity for the area and its businesses.

By forging the wedding partnership, the Council aims to work with partners and suppliers to elevate the area in this niche but highly valuable tourism market.

At the Eaves Hall event, a new website was launched, highlighting the licenced wedding venues, along with references to church venues. This can be found on www.ribbonvalleyweddingheaven.co.uk.

4 CULTURAL & LEISURE SERVICES

4.1 PLATFORM GALLERY-VIC

The income from commission sales is increasing, as anticipated, in the run up to Christmas, and sales in November were also encouragingly higher than last year. The overall position, though, is that sales are approximately £1,000 below the income received at the same stage last year.

Stock checks relating to bought stock, and artist stock on a commission basis, continue to be stock checked on a monthly basis with consistent accuracy, and the number of lines and stock levels held has reduced to facilitate greater control.

The storage of stock has also been helped, now fewer artist lines are carried and returned immediately following the end of each exhibition period.

There has been a reduction in the expenditure on casual cover, as result of a deliberate practice to operate with two staff and not cover for sickness or annual leave, unless absolutely necessary. This will help to fund the proposed Sunday opening, which is planned to commence from next Easter until the end of the summer holidays.

4.2 RIBBLESDALE POOL

Artificial Pitch: An application for funding to resurface the Tennis area with a 3G grass specific for Football has been submitted to Sport England, and a decision as to whether it has been successful is expected next year. The Tennis area is in need of rejuvenation work to prevent the surface constantly silting up at certain areas during periods of heavy rainfall, especially during winter months. Problems are also regularly encountered with the Floodlighting, and this is a source of user frustration. A scheme to improve the Floodlighting has been submitted for consideration, as part of the Council's capital funding programme.

4.3 SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

Get Healthy – Get Active Funding: Sport England have recently announced a funding programme to support projects aimed at getting more people active through sport, physical activity, and even associated social activity. It is focused around those who are least active, and the East Lancashire districts of Ribble Valley, Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle, and Rossendale have joined together in an attempt to submit an application for funding. The project is aligned to the current planned delivery of increasing opportunities for participation in activity at Community Village Hall venues, under the Active East funded project. The combined overall objective of the project is to demonstrate and evidence health improvements in individuals, through regular ongoing participation in exercise. The project is currently being scoped for submission by the end of January 2015.

Ribble Valley Cycling Festival 2015 - A week-long festival of all things cycling is being planned for June next year. The programme is being developed, and responsibility for delivery shared across the various partner representation, which comprises: LCC, RVBC, Clitheroe Bike Club, School's Cycling Instructor, Gisburn Forest, and the organiser of the Clitheroe Cycle 'Sportive' event.

5 CONCLUSION

Further relevant information regarding these matters will be provided to members in future meetings of this Committee.

JOHN C HEAP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

MARK BEVERIDGE
HEAD OF CULTURAL & LEISURE SERVICES

TOM PRIDMORE
TOURISM & EVENTS OFFICER

COLIN WINTERBOTTOM
LEISURE & SPORTS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

KATHERINE RODGERS
ARTS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

For further information on the Open Spaces Working Group
please ring for Mark Beveridge 01200 414479

For further information on the Wedding Partnership Launch
please ring Tom Pridmore 01200 414496

For further information on Artificial Pitches, and Sports Development
please ring Colin Winterbottom 01200 414588

For further information on Platform Gallery/VIC
please ring Katherine Rodgers 01200 414556