

## RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

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Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 2 JUNE 2015  
title: GENERAL REPORT  
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COMMUNITY LEISURE AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

### 1 PURPOSE

To update on waste management payments, on events and activities being organised over the summer by the Community Leisure and Sports Development Section, and to inform on the creation of a wild flower meadow at the cemetery.

### 2 WASTE MANAGEMENT

Following protracted discussions with Lancashire County Council since being given notice last year that payment of Recycling Credits would cease from 1 April 2015, agreement has now been reached for a replacement payment formula.

Whilst this does not mirror the property-based payment mechanism enjoyed by the rest of the Lancashire districts, it is felt to be the best option available to the Council, under the circumstances.

The agreement, which is to be signed soon, will expire in March 2018, when LCC have determined that existing arrangements with all other districts will come to an end.

In the meantime, outstanding invoices issued to LCC in respect of disputed levels of payments due as Recycling Credits are to be cancelled. The value of invoices to be cancelled is of the order of £82,390.

### 3 CEMETERY REGIME

The creation of a managed wild flower meadow in the oldest part of the cemetery, which will enhance the biodiversity of the area, is an objective over the coming years.

This means that 2 different mowing regimes will be tried this year to determine which work best for our cemetery. These have been determined after speaking with other authorities, and consideration of best practice elsewhere.

The area, known as Old Right, will be allowed to grow until July, after which time it will be cut short into the autumn. This ought to reduce the growth of coarse grasses, and all flowers, such cowslips, selfheal, and bugle, to prosper.

In the area known as New Right, mowing will continue until the end of June, when it will be left to flower until late autumn, thereby allowing wildflowers, such as knapweed, and lady's bedstraw, to seed.

For both areas, the initial arisings will be left in situ for a few days to allow the seeds to drop to the ground; thereafter the arisings will be lifted to reduce soil fertility.

In both areas, if any family requests access to a specific grave, we will cut a pathway into it, as we normally do, as well as to the war graves that are located in both areas.

This approach to maintenance will help us determine which is the most appropriate going forward to help establish a managed wild meadow area. It will take some years for the wild flowers to become established. However, many people are appreciative of the tranquil setting that exists there now. Improving the biodiversity will also enhance this, as well as encouraging the habitat for wildlife.

## **4 COMMUNITY LEISURE AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.1 RIBBLESDALE POOL**

- Swimtag

A new initiative is to be introduced which allows swimmers to monitor their sessions and track how many lengths they are doing, how many calories they have used, and which strokes they are doing at different times during their session. It is aimed to increase participation and retention levels at a time when swimming visits by adults and juniors are declining nationally.

There are 5 Swimtag bands available from reception, and they are kept at the docking station on reception counter when not in use. It is proposed that they are available on request at no charge for the initial taster period, which will run up until Sunday 30 August 2015. To obtain a tag, the swimmer must have a membership card, and this will help track the tag to the individual if it is not returned to reception after use.

Once the swimmer has returned the tag back to the docking station, all the information collected is available online through the Swimtag website. As soon as the user logs on, the information is displayed on progress, new personal bests, competition updates, training plan progression, and any messages from the Pool. There is also a profile page, where each swimmer is presented with a unique view of their swim, and which aims to make the experience more sociable, interactive, and fun.

- School Swimming

A pilot scheme initiated by the Amateur Swimming Association, involving ourselves and Hyndburn Borough Council, aims to raise the quality of school swimming lessons. The key objective is to raise the overall level of swimming amongst primary school children, and increase the achievement levels with regards to Key Stage 2 standard, by the end of Year 6.

It is now a requirement within OFSTED inspections that schools demonstrate records of pupil performance with regards to swimming, and the introduction of a more structured approach to achieving swimming skills is to be presented to school heads, with a view to implementation from September this year. There will be a particular focus on supporting weaker swimmers, and on the delivery of a progressive pathway for children as they complete 6 awards.

## 4.2 CYCLEFEST

The inaugural Ribble Valley 'Cyclefest' event will take place between 5-14 June 2015, and comprises various activities, including: a bike-powered music night in the castle grounds; a closed road cycle for families and those with limited experience of cycling; a mini pop-up velodrome; the Ribble Valley Ride Sportive, a focus on the world of cycling at The Grand; and a number of different led rides will be taking place throughout the week, to provide opportunities for recreational cycling.

## 4.3 PLATFORM GALLERY/VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

- Open Exhibition

The annual Open Exhibition is currently taking place in the Platform Gallery. This exhibition includes the work of 27 craft makers both locally, and from across the northwest.

The exhibition features textiles, jewellery, glass, ceramics, and mixed media. This year we are fortunate to have the internationally acclaimed Letter Carver and Typographer, Wayne Hart, exhibiting with us.

Alongside this year's main open showcase of contemporary craft in the northwest, the winner of the Selectors' Prize for Innovation 2014, Pat Fisher, was invited to exhibit her award-winning textiles. The exhibition runs until Saturday 4 July 2015.

- Sunday Opening

The facility is now open on Sundays between 11am-4.00pm on a trial basis, for the period up until the end of August 2015.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The current position of waste management repayments is clarified, the plan for wild flowers in the cemetery is outlined, and the main events and activities organised for the next few months by the Community Leisure and Sports Development Section is summarised.

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