

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

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Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 16 May 2017  
title: GENERAL REPORT  
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## 1 PURPOSE

To update on events and developments within Community Services.

## 2 CYCLE RACE

A proposal has been made by Lancaster City Council to stage a mass participation cycle race next year. If this happens, it would include some of the roads in the Borough, because they are seeking a route which starts and finishes in Lancaster, riding out to include the Ribble Valley. It could have an economic benefit for the area during the weekend that it was staged, with riders and families seeking accommodation, though potentially also bringing some disruption to the area depending upon the size of the entry. Further details are being sought to determine with what, if anything, the Council would be involved.

## 3 CLITHEROE FOOD FESTIVAL

Preparations for the Clitheroe Food Festival continue in collaboration with the Food Festival Company. The website will be revamped using a new template and launched as soon as possible. This will promote the festival and sell demonstration tickets.

The number of stalls this year will be a similar number to 2016, with producers wanting to return to one of the Top 10 Food Festivals in the country. The number seeking stalls exceeds the space available, providing the opportunity to ensure the quality standards are maintained. A number of new attractions are being developed to make it even better in 2017, and these will be announced throughout the Spring, to help make sure visitors have a range of things to do and see, in addition to the wide range of producers represented.

The Festival Board has been working hard to retain previous sponsors and attract new companies to the Festival. These will be given the opportunity to have a presence on the web site and in the marketing material issued for the day.

Social media will again be a major channel for ensuring information is distributed to people interested in the Festival. There is less emphasis on demonstrations and more on tastings, because this proved popular last year.

There is no need to increase the numbers attending much beyond what has been achieved in recent years, because it is already extremely popular and the town has a natural capacity to be able to stage the event.

## 4 TOURISM ACTIVITIES

### 4.1 Visitor Guide and Website Refresh

The new 2017 Discover Ribble Valley Visitor was launched at an event to celebrate English Tourism week. The event also marked the launch of a new Ribble Valley Food

website [www.ribblevalleyfoodheaven.com](http://www.ribblevalleyfoodheaven.com), which promotes local food outlets, suppliers and providers, to visitors and local people. The website features guide advertisers, with an allocation of space which relates to advertising purchased in the printed publication. This new site is designed to provide a one-stop-shop for places to eat in Ribble Valley, as well as places to purchase locally grown or sourced food and drink. The site will also feature food offers, menus and more detailed information on chefs and events. The launch involved food producers with a mini local market place, where guests from local tourism businesses were able to taste and sample locally produced food and drink. The event was designed to encourage local businesses to use local suppliers, as well as promote local food to their visitors.

The event also marked the relaunch of the popular Visit Ribble Valley website, the primary tourism website for the area. [www.visitribblevalley.co.uk](http://www.visitribblevalley.co.uk) has been restructured and redesigned to make it more user-friendly. Again, advertisers in the guide will now get priority exposure on the website. For example, if you are looking for accommodation, a search for somewhere to stay on the website will automatically offer guide advertisers first. This added value will help promote sales income for 2018. This new approach not only responds to the growing demand for electronic information but also provides a better deal for guide advertisers. Furthermore, it gives the Council a justification for the way in which tourism information is presented electronically

The printed guide has a 25,000 print run, part of which is distributed through a national service, with a policy of minimal wastage, i.e. guides are supplied to outlets such as tourist information and visitor centres on demand, rather than ad-hoc or in bulk. The guide is also distributed locally and most local accommodation providers use it as a bedroom browser. Work will now begin on the 2018 edition, with a particular aim to enhance the photographic library for promotional use.

#### **4.2 Group Travel**

In partnership with the Ribble Valley Tourism Association, the services of leading consultant Steve Reed Tourism have been employed to deliver a workshop to develop a strategy for group travel into the area. It was attended by some of Ribble Valley's leading tourism businesses, including attractions and accommodation providers. It also attracted representatives from tour guiding and coach operations. Steve Reed Tourism is one of the major consultancies specializing in group travel in England, and the workshop discussed ways to attract more, and better quality, groups. A working group, coordinated by the Council's Tourism Officer, has been created to take this initiative forward.

#### **4.3 Ribble Valley Tourism Awards**

The Ribble Valley Tourism awards are an opportunity to celebrate the success of local tourism enterprises such as restaurants, hotels and attractions. They also provide the opportunity to reward the special efforts of individuals in making visitors and guests welcome into the area. The awards are run jointly by the Ribble Valley Tourism Association supported the Council. They are unique in that anyone may make nominations, and this year businesses nominated themselves, their staff, and indeed, each other. The public were also invited to make nominations via social media, as the RVTA searched for the 'Stars of Tourism' of the past twelve months. An independent panel considered a large number of submissions, and selected those who they believed to be the most deserving winners.

The awards are not necessarily designed to determine the 'best of' but more to recognize achievement, innovation, quality design, creativity and, most of all, people. They consider people both as individuals and as teams, as it is the people that work so hard to make visitors welcome and make tourism in the Ribble Valley so special.

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Star Award</b>
Transformational Tourism	Holmes Mill
Creative Tourism	Latitude
Family Friendly Tourism	Mrs Dowson's Farm Park
Creative Marketing	John Flanagan, Jazz and Blues
Quality Tourism	Millstone Mellor
Creativity in Food and Hospitality	Gibbon Bridge Hotel
Team Excellence in customer service	Aspinall Arms
Team Excellence and innovation	Spread Eagle Sawley
Team Spirit	Dream Weddings, James Places
New Event of the Year	Create Longridge
Event of the Year	Ribfest music festival
Website of the year	Browsholme Hall
Unsung Heroes	David Bamber, Stanley House
	Robert Lowe, Gibbon Bridge
	David Piff, Mitton Hall
	Nick Bristow, Eaves Hall
Excellence in customer service	Catherine Turner, Browsholme
	Nina Rubin, Mitton Hall
Tourism Heroes	Mike and Paula Fairburn, Bowland Cottage

#### 4.4 External Educational Liaison

In support of helping young people development their skills, the Tourism and Events Officer continues to work closely with educational establishments, taking student placements and working with universities requiring consultancy style projects. This not only offers students 'real life' work experience, but provides valuable research data for the Council's tourism product development. Recently, a consultancy project by a student from the University of Central Lancashire has helped develop a new strategy on the promotion of events using social media, whilst a team from Leeds Beckett University has evaluated the impact, value and potential of wedding tourism. Regular work experience participants also help with tourism promotions at different times of the year, and this year, one 3-month marketing placement has been hosted from the International Business Academy in Denmark. All student placements provide valuable support for tourism development but moreover, bring new and fresh ideas.

#### 5 CONCLUSION

Further relevant information regarding these and other activities and developments will be brought to future meetings.

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