



'Jewel in Lancashire's crown' council launches ambitious community investment programme

▼ TOP GEAR – The £100,000 Longridge Pump Track is now open for business.



◀ JEWELS IN THE CROWN – Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Simon Hore with (from the left) the council's chief executive, Marshal Scott, director of resources Jane Pearson, director of community services Adam Allen and director of planning and economic development Nicola Hopkins.

RIBBLE Valley Borough Council has launched its biggest and most ambitious capital programme since it was formed in 1974.

The borough's sports, leisure and recreation facilities are to benefit from a whopping £20million cash bonanza, £15million of it in the next two years.

Not only that, but the council's economic development team has been at the forefront of securing vital Government funds for a host of projects, from the extension of a much-loved community centre to the construction of the Longridge Pump Track (pictured above).

The council, described by acting leader Simon Hore as 'the jewel in Lancashire's crown', has the lowest council tax in Lancashire, no debt and one of the highest customer satisfaction rates in the UK, along with a host of other accolades.

But given ongoing uncertainty around the future of local government, councillors across the chamber want to ensure that council resources are spent entirely in Ribble Valley.

Simon Hore said: "We have decided to be ambitious with our capital programme, by reducing five-year schedules to two and bringing forward some schemes already approved in principle.

"Our prudent financial planning over many years has enabled us to build reserves for use on these projects and councillors are committed to creating a legacy for the benefit of current and future residents."

Turn to the centre pages to find out how Ribble Valley Borough Council will be boosting community projects and facilities over the coming months and years.



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Local government in Lancashire faces biggest shake-up in over 50 years

THE biggest shake-up of local government in over 50 years could be on the cards for Lancashire.

But Ribble Valley councillors across the chamber have vowed to fight for the best deal for the borough if the proposed reorganisation goes ahead.

The Government ordered Lancashire authorities to draw up an interim plan for a substantial reduction in the number of councils in the county by March 21.

All 15 Lancashire council leaders put their names to a letter setting out their initial thoughts on what should happen to local government if their authorities were abolished.

The letter set out options for between just one and up to five new authorities to replace those that currently exist, but said no option had majority support.

The shake-up being demanded by the

Government is part of a nationwide local government overhaul and will see Lancashire County Council, unitary authorities in Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen and the county's 12 district authorities, among them Ribble Valley, scrapped.

They will be replaced by a handful of unitary authorities covering much larger areas and delivering all council services on their patch.

Ribble Valley Borough Council acting leader Simon Hore said: "The absence of a single proposal emerging from Lancashire is in part because of the complexities of the county and our collective desire to ensure the best outcome for our residents and businesses.

"There are real, pressing issues of local identity, culture and heritage, particularly in rural boroughs like Ribble Valley that require careful consideration if we are to get this right.

"There will no doubt be many discussions

and debates over the coming months as the situation develops and Ribble Valley residents can be assured that we will be fighting for the very best outcome for the borough if reorganisation goes ahead."

The Government has said it wants new unitary authorities across the UK of around 500,000 people each to 'achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks' – Ribble Valley has just over 60,000 residents, so could not stand alone.

The Government is expected to respond to Lancashire's interim letter of March 21 shortly, with an invitation to submit a final proposal by November 28.

Further updates will be available in future editions of Ribble Valley News or at ribblevalley.gov.uk



▲ "Ribble Valley residents and businesses can be assured that we will be fighting for the very best outcome for the borough if reorganisation goes ahead." – the council's acting leader, Simon Hore



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Join the council family and 'make a difference' to the community

IF you are looking for a rewarding career that will have a positive impact on people's lives look no further than your local council.

Councils like Ribble Valley Borough Council provide essential services that residents rely on every day, such as planning, environmental health, refuse collection and street cleansing.

Now the council has joined the national Make a Difference campaign, organised by the Local Government Association and funded by the Government, which celebrates the wide range of roles available for people from all backgrounds and skill levels looking to start a career in local government.

The campaign aims to address workforce shortages by attracting new talent into councils, ensuring they can continue to provide the vital services on which communities depend.

Rosie Elms, chairman of Ribble Valley Borough Council's personnel committee, said: "Councils provide a wide range of essential services and offer a great career path, as well as a real sense of achievement and purpose among their workers.

"Working in local government offers unparalleled opportunities to make a

real difference to people's lives and there has never been more important time to join the sector.

"From providing affordable homes and clean streets to ensuring restaurants are safe and public finances well managed, there are a wide variety of challenging and important roles on offer.

"We are doing our best to maximise opportunities for training, development and career progression, from apprenticeships and vocational training to professional qualifications and postgraduate degrees.

"And Ribble Valley Borough Council is a great place to work, with high staff satisfaction rates, friendly colleagues and a host of benefits, such as welfare schemes and flexible working."

Abi Brown OBE, chairman of the LGA's Improvement and Innovation Board, added: "With public services facing mounting need, we need good people to carry out good work in their communities.

"We hope that talented individuals who are keen to progress their careers take up this call to join their local council in delivering the vital services their communities use and rely on every day."



▲ **MAKING A DIFFERENCE** – Rosie Elms, chairman of Ribble Valley Borough Council's personnel committee (foreground), with council staff who have recently completed apprenticeships, degrees and postgraduate degrees, as part of their career progression.

Ribble Valley Borough Council is currently recruiting for various posts in waste management, amenity cleansing, legal services and planning, and further details are available at ribblevalley.gov.uk.

You can also find out about other local government careers at localcounciljobs.gov.uk, which includes a postcode search to help you find your ideal role.

Sign up for council tax e-billing and access your account 24/7



SIGN up for council tax e-billing and you could access a raft of online round-the-clock features. Council Tax Online and Business Rates Online give you the convenience of accessing your accounts at a time that suits you.

It also reduces printing and postage costs, which is good for the environment and helps Ribble Valley Borough Council maintain the lowest council tax in Lancashire.

You can use your online account to check your council tax or business rates, sign up for e-billing and view or download bills.

◀ **CLICKETY CLICK** – Sign up council tax e-billing tax e-billing and access your account 24/7.

You can also notify the council of a change of address, request or cancel a single person discount and view or change your contact details.



To sign up, simply go to ribblevalley.gov.uk and have your name, account number and an online key, which you will find beneath the account number on the front of your council tax or business rates bill, to hand. If your bill isn't to hand, visit ribblevalley.gov.uk/revenuesonlinecntax or ribblevalley.gov.uk/revenuesonlinecntax to get started.

£250,000 revamp makes Clitheroe Market ‘un-beet-able’

A £250,000 revamp of Clitheroe Market has been completed on schedule and to budget. The revamp features extensive improvements to the market’s iconic bullring, including new flagging and street furniture; along with LED lighting, roof panels, gutters and back panels on permanent stalls, new laminate tabletops on temporary stalls and the steam-cleaning of selected areas.

The spruce-up has been funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which supports projects that boost community pride, businesses, people and skills.

But that’s not all – the next phase of a revamp of Clitheroe town centre has also received the green light.

Over £600,000 of improvements in Castle Street, including the narrowing of the road, resurfacing and widening of footways, new signage, parking and loading restrictions, benches, bollards and street furniture, were completed last summer.

The revamp, funded by Ribble Valley Borough Council and Lancashire County Council, was so successful – also completed ahead of schedule and to budget – that the two councils have given the thumbs-up to an extension of the scheme into Market Place.

The proposed works, which it is hoped will start in the summer, will also feature new footways, signage, benches, bollards and street furniture to match Castle Street.

Ribble Valley Borough Council acting leader Simon Hore said: “The refurbishment of the



▲ UN-BEET-ABLE – Ribble Valley Borough Council acting leader Simon Hore and the council’s director of planning and economic development, Nicola Hopkins, at the new look Clitheroe Market bullring.

Clitheroe Market bullring has been undertaken in consultation with market traders and users. “The contractors have pulled out the stops to complete the work ahead of schedule and the bullring looks fantastic. “The feedback we have received so far has been very positive and the market scheme, along with the proposed Market Place works, will make Clitheroe an even more attractive place to visit.”

Clitheroe has hosted a regular market since the Norman Conquest in the 12th Century. On market day – Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays – over 80 stalls sell fruit and vegetables, bread and cakes, fish and meat, clothing and lingerie, curtains and fabrics, flowers and electrical goods.

Businesses ‘get ready’ call for waste collection changes



BUSINESSES in Ribble Valley with the equivalent of 10 or more full-time equivalent employees are advised to get ready for sweeping changes to waste collection. The Government’s Simpler Recycling scheme aims to make recycling across England easier.

It means that businesses with 10 or more full-time equivalent employees, including schools and hospitals, must now separate food waste and dry recyclables from general waste collection.

Dry recyclables will include paper and cardboard in one receptacle and bottles and cans in another.

Food waste includes all food intended for human or pet consumption, along with biodegradable material, such as fruit and vegetable skins, teabags and bones.

And from March 31 2027 businesses with fewer than 10 full-time equivalent employees must follow suit.

Further information on what Simpler Recycling means for you is available at gov.uk.

Get a slice of the action at this year’s Clitheroe Food Festival

CALLING all food enthusiasts – save the date for this year’s Clitheroe Food Festival on Saturday, August 9.

The festival, sponsored by Fort Vale and Compleat Food Group, will round off the Ribble Valley Taste Fest, a week-long celebration of Lancashire’s best food and drink.

Last year’s festival attracted more than 25,000 visitors to the town – a record attendance – and this year’s event promises to be even tastier.

More producers than ever are vying for a slice of the action, with applications from 112 already, an increase of 27 on last year.

The event is hailed as one of the best food festivals in the UK by travel magazine Conde Nast Traveller and listed in the Top Ten UK Food Festivals by Eventbrite.

It features top-quality food and drink from dozens of exhibitors, along with a feast of family-friendly fun and huge dollop of street entertainment.

It tops off the Ribble Valley Taste Fest from August 4 to 8, which will feature a series of themed ‘walks with taste’ incorporating cheese-making demonstrations, brewery tours and gin-tasting sessions, at farms and food venues throughout the borough.

David Birtwhistle, chairman of Ribble Valley Borough Council’s economic development committee, said: “Preparations for this year’s Clitheroe Food Festival and Taste Fest are well under way and we are looking forward to another successful celebration of local food and drink.

“The festival attracts tens of thousands of visitors to Ribble Valley and as well as showcasing the borough to a national



▲ SLICE OF THE ACTION – The Clitheroe Food Festival looks set to attract thousands of food enthusiasts on Saturday, August 9.

audience provides a welcome boost to our businesses. “All we need is good weather, so keep your

fingers crossed and come and join us for a week-long showcase of the best food and drink in Lancashire.”

Further details about the festival are available at clitheroefoodfestival.com

'Jewel in Lancashire's crown' council launches ambitious community investment programme

RIBBLE Valley Borough Council has launched its most ambitious capital programme since it was formed in 1974.

Councillors across the chamber want council resources to be spent entirely in the borough amid ongoing uncertainty about the future of local government.

The council has also been at the forefront of securing Government funding for a host of projects, from the extension of a much-loved community centre to the installation of broadband in an isolated hamlet.

Read on to find out how our communities are getting a slice of the action.



Castle and pool among those to benefit from £20million cash splash

£20M

SPORTS, leisure and recreation facilities in Ribble Valley are to benefit from a £20million cash bonanza.

Councillors have unanimously agreed to slash proposed timetables for spending an estimated £20million on capital projects from five years to just two in the biggest and most ambitious capital programme in the borough since it was formed in 1974.

Ribblesdale Pool in Clitheroe is to receive a £3million upgrade, featuring mechanical and electrical improvements, new boilers, ventilation and filtration systems, and a specialist survey of the pool tank.

Clitheroe Castle will see a £1.5million top-up to funds already pledged for ongoing structural works at the castle keep, along with new benches, bins, bollards and signposts; upgraded pathways, roads and steps; the painting of railings and gates across the entire 16-acre site, as well as a revamp of the bandstand and new roofing and boilers at the museum.

And Longridge is to receive a £1.45million all-weather sports pitch, including floodlights and five-a-side cages, at the Brian Holden Memorial Playing Field.

Furthermore, there will be an additional £750,000 on top of existing capital allocations

to bring play areas throughout the borough to a high standard, featuring new fences, repairs or renewal of safety surfacing, comprehensive repainting of existing steel framed equipment and additional equipment at sites where space permits.

Ribble Valley Borough Council acting leader Simon Hore said: "Our thoughtful and prudent financial planning over many years has enabled us to build reserves for use on capital projects.

"And given uncertainty around the future of local government councillors are committed to using those reserves to create a legacy for the benefit of Ribble Valley's current and future residents.

"So, we have decided to be ambitious with our capital programme, by reducing five-year schedules to two and bringing forward some schemes already approved in principle.

"The investments in Clitheroe Castle and Ribblesdale Pool, two of the borough's most prized facilities, will ensure that they can be enjoyed by residents and visitors for many years to come."

Clitheroe Castle has dominated the Ribble Valley skyline since its construction in the 12th Century by Robert de Lacy to protect his vast estates.



It is now owned and managed by Ribble Valley Borough Council and attracts tens of thousands of visitors annually to its Norman keep, labyrinth, popular museum and 16 acres of picturesque parkland.

Ribblesdale Pool has served generations of local swimmers and its 50 weekly sessions, including lane, public, social, mobility and

▲ **CASH SPLASH** – Ribble Valley Borough Council acting leader Simon Hore, with the council's director of community services, Adam Allen.

women-only swims, aqua fitness classes and children's parties, attract over 120,000 visits a year.

Village potholed car park revamped with £43,000 grant

A VILLAGE hall that provides a much-valued meeting place for isolated residents has received a £43,000 revamp of its potholed car park.

Aighton, Bailey and Chaigley Memorial Hall has received the cash from the Government's Rural England Prosperity Fund for the resurfacing of its car park and additional playground equipment.

The fund, administered by Ribble Valley Borough Council, aims to strengthen the rural economy by supporting capital projects that boost small businesses or improve community infrastructure.

The hall was opened in 1965 as a war memorial and is a major meeting place for Hurst Green residents, as there are no shops in the village and a very limited bus service.

Known locally as the ABC, it is used by the Women's Institute, a play group, youth

club, hosts dance classes and is the home of Hurst Green Football Club.

ABC Memorial Hall chairman Niall Macfarlane said: "Our aim is to provide a venue that brings people together and builds strong relationships in the community, through inclusive social, sports and leisure activities.

"We are delighted to receive this grant, which has enabled us to bring much-needed improvements to the car park and adjacent playground, and I would like to thank Aighton, Bailey and Chaigley parish council chairman Margaret Carrington for her work on the scheme and Ribble Valley Borough Council for supporting our application."

Hurst Green is a major stop on the Tolkien Trail, which attracts visitors from throughout the UK, who use the ABC car park.

▲ Ribble Valley Deputy Mayor Simon O'Rourke, with (from the left) ABC committee members Derek Harwood, Peter Butterfield, chairman Niall Macfarlane and Aighton, Bailey and Chaigley parish council chairman Margaret Carrington.



£43K

New extension will boost visitor numbers at historic community centre

£127K

A WHALLEY community centre celebrating its 300th anniversary has received a £127,000 funding boost.

The Whalley Old Grammar School and Community Centre has received the cash from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, administered by Ribble Valley Borough Council, for the building of a new extension and extra rooms for the provision for popular craft activities, such as woodworking.

It is estimated that the extra rooms will attract up to 5,000 more visitors a year to the centre.

The centre's car park has also been improved to provide extra parking spaces.

Chairman of the centre's trustees, Terry Hill, said: "The Old Grammar School is one of the most iconic buildings in Whalley and

this funding has enabled us to undertake crucial work to ensure it continues to serve local people well into the future."

Stuart Hirst, chairman of the council's community services committee, said: "It is great to see this historic building thriving and continuing to provide a valuable space for people to meet and enjoy a wide range of activities at the heart of their community."

The community centre currently has 11 rooms for hire for groups of between six and 80 people enjoying a range of activities, such as art, pottery, sewing, beading, crochet, languages, woodwork and yoga.

The building dates back to 1725 and was a grammar school for boys until 1910, after which it was taken over by the Whalley Educational Foundation.



► **GOOD EDUCATION** – From left to right are Whalley Community Centre trustee Mark Hindle, treasurer Jo Ann Murphy, Ribble Valley Deputy Mayor Simon O'Rourke, chairman Terry Hill and secretary Martin Fewster.

Funding boost plugs 'not-spot' hamlet into faster internet

A HAMLET in Ribble Valley hampered by poor digital infrastructure and slow internet speeds is feeling a 'Giga bit' more connected thanks to a £50,000 funding boost.

The Knowle Green Gigabit broadband project has received the cash from the Government's Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF).

The fund, administered by Ribble Valley Borough Council, aims to strengthen the rural economy by supporting capital projects that boost small businesses and improve community infrastructure.

A successful bid to the fund was made by a 15-strong team of volunteers, with the support of Ribchester Parish Council and community benefit company B4RN: Broadband for the Rural North.

The new superfast digital service will provide connections to more than 300 homes and businesses.

Project spokesman Darrin Robinson said: "I would like to thank all the volunteers who have worked to secure funding for this scheme.

"We have agreement from more than 100 local landowners to allow the network to be

installed and we are very proud of what we have achieved."

Paul Yates, chairman of Ribchester Parish Council, said: "This is great news for our small community and means we will be hooked up to superfast digital services that people living in towns and cities take for granted, while enjoying the benefits of living in such beautiful countryside."

Elaine Elrick, of B4RN, added: "Knowle Green is a vibrant rural community which has been severely hampered by poor digital infrastructure and slow internet connection speeds.

"Lack of effective broadband hampers businesses' ability to connect with their customers and suppliers, stunts business growth, affects residents' life by being unable to access digital healthcare, or streaming services, as well as preventing homeworking.

"B4RN is really pleased to have worked with the volunteers and organisations involved in bringing full fibre broadband to Knowle Green."



▲ **PLUGGED IN** – From left to right are Ribchester Parish Council chairman Paul Yates, project volunteer Darrin Robinson, Ribble Valley Deputy Mayor Simon O'Rourke, Knowle Green resident Colin Entwistle and B4RN project coordinator Felicity Greenwood.

£50K

Longridge's £100,000 top-notch pump track goes into top gear

£100K



WORK on the creation of a top-notch £100,000 pump track in Longridge is now complete.

The £100,000 scheme at the Kestor Lane Recreation Ground is being funded by £60,000 from Ribble Valley Borough Council via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and £40,000 from the Lancashire Environmental Fund.

The track has been created following consultation with Longridge residents, who said they needed a wheeled sports facility in

the town, and designed by top pump track company Velosolutions, which has designed some of the best tracks in the world.

It will be suitable for bicycles, scooters, rollerblades, skateboards and wheelchairs, and will be a community asset for generations to come.

A pump track is a circuit of rollers, banked turns and other features designed to be ridden by riders 'pumping' their bodies up and down to create momentum.

They are an increasingly popular way

to exercise, while developing balance and handling skills in a safe environment, away from traffic and other dangers.

The Longridge track features bumps and berms up to 1.8 metres high and is two metres wide.

It has been created on an under-developed part of the recreation ground and will not impact on existing pitches.

Grass, wildflowers and native trees have been planted in and around the circuit to help it blend in with its setting.

◀ **GEARED UP** – Longridge's top-notch pump track is now complete.

Our environment and climate change strategy

LIKE many local authorities, Ribble Valley Borough Council has set a target to reduce its carbon emissions by 2030.

We know you are worried about climate change, because 54 per cent of respondents in our 2023

People's survey told us so.

So, we have developed a Climate Change Action Plan, which aims to be a major step in becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

From rewilding Clitheroe Castle and the Edisford

riverbank to planting carbon-busting redwood trees, installing electric vehicle charging points on our car parks to preparing for food waste collection, read on to find out how Ribble Valley Borough Council will be doing its bit to tackle climate change over the coming years.

Carbon-busting tree scheme takes root across the borough

A CARBON-BUSTING tree scheme commemorating the council's 50th anniversary has taken root across Ribble Valley.

Two greenhouse-gas-gobbling 'golden groves' of five redwood trees each were planted at Edisford in Clitheroe and St John's Playing Fields in Longridge to commemorate the council's landmark anniversary last year.

And a further 40 redwoods are in the process of being planted at parishes throughout the borough.

The latest redwoods are due to be planted at Whalley Abbey and Browsholme Hall, with further plantings on the cards over the coming weeks at the Huntroyde Estate, Simonstone Hall and Forest of Bowland.

Giant redwoods are the tallest living thing on earth capable of storing

hundreds of tonnes of carbon through 'sequestration', the process by which trees capture and store carbon in their roots and branches.

One giant redwood can store more carbon than a hectare of woodland and 250 times more than the average tree.

The RVBC50 'redwood lungs' are expected to bust the entire lifetime's carbon footprint of around 50 residents.

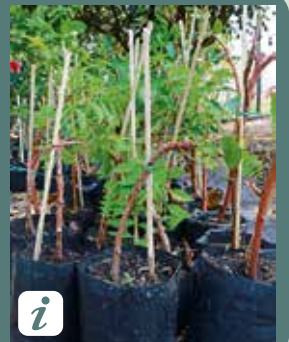
Ribble Valley Borough Council countryside officer David Hewitt said: "Giant redwoods have an incredible ability to soak up and store carbon, and a crucial role to play in tackling climate change.

"Redwoods exude great presence, giving a sense that you are meeting one of nature's wonders, and we are delighted to be part of a commemorative move to preserve, celebrate and utilise



▲ **CARBON BUSTERS** – Ribble Valley Mayor Louise Edge and council countryside officer David Hewitt have planted the latest RVBC50 redwood at Clitheroe Castle.

As well as the RVBC50 redwood scheme, Ribble Valley Borough Council is currently planting Miyawaki forests – a denser form of planting that boosts carbon sequestration devised by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki – at John Smith's Playing Field in Longridge and Edisford in Clitheroe, in partnership with Lancashire County Council.



Parish councils in Ribble Valley interested in planting one of the remaining redwoods are asked to contact David Hewitt on 01200 425111 or 07725 602744 without delay.



Council charging ahead with EV power to the people

WHEN it comes to the provision of electric vehicle (EV) charging points for residents and visitors, Ribble Valley Borough Council is charging ahead.

Motorists are switching to electric cars in their droves, which is predicted to increase over the coming years, when the sale of new petrol and diesel cars is phased out from 2030.

Research shows that using a fully electric car can reduce your carbon footprint by around two tonnes of CO2 a year.

And one in three of respondents to the 2023 Ribble Valley People's Survey said they drive an electric or hybrid vehicle.

One of the main stalling points for electric car owners, particularly those without access to a private drive, is how to charge your vehicle.

So, Ribble Valley Borough Council is accelerating moves to provide EV

charging points across the borough.

The council has installed 22 EV charging points in council-owned car parks and is in the process of installing six points at the Barclay Road car park in Longridge.

We are also working with Lancashire County Council on a scheme to provide on-street EV charging, so that residents can charge their vehicles on the road outside their home.

Lancashire County Council has been allocated £10.1million from the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund to install on-street low-powered charging points in residential areas across the county, including Ribble Valley.

The 15-year project, which is scheduled to start in September and will eventually see almost 5,000 charging points installed across Lancashire, will help residents who don't have access to

off-street parking.

A pilot scheme will also trial the installation of a cable tray (a narrow channel cut into the pavement) allowing residents to safely charge their electric vehicle using a domestic home charger.

Pilot installations took place in Sabden last year, with properties in Clitheroe and Chatburn awaiting installation.

And in the coming months residents will be able to apply for the installation of a cable tray outside their property for a fee, subject to eligibility.

David Birtwhistle, chairman of Ribble Valley Borough Council's climate change working group, said: "We are seeing more and more fully electric or hybrid cars and vans on our roads.

"Not only are they cleaner, which means reduced greenhouse gases, cleaner air and less negative impact on our health, but they are also quieter, which means less noise.

"We are doing what we can to make it easier for people to use electric vehicles by providing a range of charging options across the borough, which is particularly important for residents living in rural areas who do not have access to town centre charging points."

"Electric vehicles are the future and we are working to make sure our residents and visitors remain plugged in and switched on to a greener future."

Ribble Valley Borough Council is also switching to electric vehicles where practical.

Vans used by the pest control and dog warden teams have been switched from diesel to clean electric – saving money and helping to reduce pollution.



▲ **GREEN FLEET** – Stuart Hirst, chairman of Ribble Valley Borough Council's community services committee (left) and the council's head of environmental health, Andrew Dent.

Solar panels on council offices to reduce costs and tackle climate change

WORK starts soon on the installation of over 100 solar panels on the roof of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Offices in Clitheroe.

It is part of work by the council on 'green' schemes across the borough to reduce carbon emissions, tackle climate change and reduce energy costs.

Over 100 5ft x 3ft panels will be installed to catch the sun and convert it into electricity to power the council offices.

The £80,000 scheme is expected to save the council over £1million in energy costs over the next 25 years.

Adam Allen, director of community services at Ribble Valley Borough Council, said: "These solar panels will enable the council to generate some of its own energy from the sun and reduce fuel bills, a saving that can be used to help deliver services.

"It will also help to reduce the borough's carbon footprint and play a small part in our efforts to tackle climate change."

Other 'green' schemes in the pipeline include tree-planting, the installation of electric vehicle chargers in public car parks and switching the council's vehicle fleet from diesel to electric.



▲ **SHINE ON:** Ribble Valley Borough Council acting leader Simon Hore and the council's director of community services, Adam Allen.

Sign up for raft of affordable homes in Ribble Valley

A RAFT of affordable homes for purchase or rent will be available in Clitheroe, Chatburn and Longridge, over the coming months.

But if you are interested you need to sign up for Ribble Valley Borough Council's affordable housing register without delay.

Nearly 300 properties for affordable rent, shared ownership, discount sale or exclusively for the over-55s will be available to local households with an annual income below £80,000 and in some cases with a minimal deposit.

The keys to the door are now available for two, three and four-bedroom houses, and two-bedroom bungalows, at the Alston Grange development in Longridge and Higher Standen in Clitheroe.

And a further three terraced properties will also be up for grabs in Longridge by first-time buyers with a strong local connection at a 30 per cent discount over the coming weeks.

All new housing developments in Ribble Valley have to comprise 30 per cent affordable properties that meet a local need and attract a mix of people of all ages and circumstances to help create a balanced community.

Discount sale properties are available to people with a local connection for up to 30 per cent below the market value, while shared ownership allows you to buy between 25 and 75 per cent of a property, with an affordable rent on the remainder.

Properties are also available for affordable rent below the market value in line with the local housing allowance.

Mark Hindle, chairman of Ribble Valley



▲ KEY TO THE DOOR – Mark Hindle, chairman of Ribble Valley Borough Council's health and housing committee; the council's housing strategy officer, Rachael Stott, and Bethany Hughes, neighbourhood specialist at affordable homes provider Onward Homes, at the Alston Grange development in Longridge.

Borough Council's health and housing committee, said: "Good housing plays a fundamental part in people's physical and mental health, but the provision of affordable housing is one of the most pressing issues facing the council.

"Our affordable housing schemes are an ideal way for some residents to access the housing market and we are delighted that these properties are becoming available in Clitheroe and Longridge, where affordability is a particularly problem."

To register for an affordable rental property, go to ribblevalley.gov.uk, or to apply for discount sale housing contact Ribble Valley Borough Council's housing team on 01200 425111. 

Up to £2,000 to help people with dementia live safely at home

PEOPLE with dementia or memory loss in Ribble Valley can live more safely in their homes thanks to a new council grant.




Ribble Valley Borough Council is offering up to £2,000 for a range of adaptations or specialist equipment to help people with dementia or memory loss navigate their living space.

Grant recipients must live in Ribble Valley and be experiencing memory loss due to a neurological disorder.

The adaptations will be undertaken by home improvement agency Homewise, following an assessment, and may include smart home kits, assisted technology, signage, big button telephones, dementia clocks, touch bedside lights, grabrails and bathroom adaptations.

Rachael Stott, Ribble Valley Borough Council's housing strategy officer, said: "Enabling people to live in their own homes is our priority and this can often be achieved with a range of simple adaptations.

"The home safety dementia grant will allow us to assist people with memory loss to live in greater safety and comfort."

For further information about home safety dementia grants, phone Homewise on 01254 232249. 

'Lollipop lady' Amanda on the up thanks to 'amazing' council scheme

A CLITHEROE lollipop lady forced to sleep in her dining room for over a decade is on the up thanks to Ribble Valley Borough Council. And if you are elderly or vulnerable you too can get help to live more independently in your home.

Due to a progressive disability Amanada Townsend cannot use the stairs in her Siddows Avenue home and had to sleep in her dining room for 12 years.

Her property was unsuitable for a stair lift, but thanks to the installation of a through-the-floor lift Amanda is now able to sleep in her bedroom, as well as use a newly converted wet room.

Amanda's home was adapted using the council's disabled facilities grant scheme.

The grants include a mix of means-tested disabled facilities grants (non-means-tested if the facilities are for children) of up to £55,000 and non-means-tested discretionary grants, called Ribble Valley Adaptations, of up to £10,000 for such as accessible showers and stairlifts.

Amanda described the changes to her home as 'amazing' and the impact of the adaption on her life as 'phenomenal'.

She said: "After thinking I would have to leave my family home, the council has transformed it into a home for the rest of my life.

"The ramp at the front door makes it much easier for me to get in and out of the house and the lift has enabled me to use my bedroom for the first time in 12 years.

"Thanks to these adaptations I can now stay in my own home and I want to thank Ribble Valley Borough Council, its housing team and contractors, from the bottom of my heart."


Amanda is well-known to people in the Woone Lane area of Clitheroe as the lollipop lady at St James's CE Primary School.

She is currently able to walk on the flat and is determined to work as long as possible, but as her disability progresses she is finding stepping up kerbs difficult.

Home adaptations have to be recommended by an occupational therapist and the work is funded and overseen to the highest standard by the council's surveying team.



▲ ON THE UP – Clitheroe lollipop lady Amanda Townsend has received a new lease of life thanks to a home lift installed by Ribble Valley Borough Council.

For further information about disabled facilities grants or adaptations to your home, visit ribblevalley.gov.uk, or phone Lancashire Social Services on 0300 123 6720 and request an occupational therapy assessment. 

Help at hand for properties troubled by summer pests

HELP is at hand for Ribble Valley properties troubled by pests and insects this summer.

Pests can access your property via gaps and build nests in your attic or garage, wall cavities and even in unused cupboards.

And as the weather gets warmer they start to emerge from the warm and cosy boltholes they have made in homes and businesses.

But for just £56.70 Ribble Valley Borough Council's pest control team will assess the situation and give you a helping hand.

The team's knowledge and expertise can be called upon to treat mice, rats, wasps, cockroaches, fleas, ants, insects, moles and squirrels.

Visits take place by appointment on weekdays and repeat visits may be required to fully treat the pests.

The pest control service will also visit commercial premises at a rate of £65.00 per hour, plus the cost of any products used.



▲ NO MORE MR MICE GUY – Ribble Valley Borough Council's pest control team can help if you are troubled by pests and insects.

If you are troubled by pests, phone Ribble Valley Borough Council on 01200 425111. 

Village football club nets £35,000 to go up a league



A VILLAGE football club has netted £35,000 to help it go up a league as a community facility. Hurst Green Football Club has scored the cash from the Government's Rural England Prosperity Fund. The fund, administered by Ribble Valley Borough Council, aims to strengthen the rural economy by supporting capital projects that boost small businesses and improve community infrastructure. Hurst Green Football Club, which was founded in 1916 and enjoys a sublime position overlooked by Pendle Hill, fields three senior teams and attracts up to 100 enthusiastic spectators every home game. It also offers training opportunities for boys aged over 16 and has ambitious plans to set up junior teams for boys and girls in partnership with local primary schools.

The club's chairman Simon Tipton said: "Hurst Green Football Club is a thriving community hub giving people the chance to socialise, volunteer and support their local team and we now have a clubhouse where we can serve food and refreshments. "We are delighted to receive this grant, which has enabled us to put solar panels on our clubhouse, new flooring and seating inside and decking outside, so that it can be used as a community space. "I would like to thank Ribble Valley Borough Council staff, club secretary Sam Hayes and Clitheroe energy efficiency company EcoGiants for their hard work in helping us go up a league as a community facility."

◀ **IN THE NET** – Ribble Valley Deputy Mayor Simon O'Rourke, with EcoGiants managing director Christian Gillibrand taking a shot and Hurst Green Football Club secretary Sam Hayes holding the cheque.

Clitheroe showcase for Lancashire's most talented craft-makers



▲ **GET CRAFTY** – The work of Lancashire's most talented craft-makers is being showcased at the Platform Gallery in Clitheroe.

THE work of Lancashire's most talented craft-makers is being showcased at the Platform Gallery in Clitheroe.

The Station Road gallery is hosting its celebrated Craft Open exhibition featuring textiles, ceramics, jewellery, metalwork, woodwork, furniture and glass, as well as two and three-dimensional pieces, from 55 makers. The free exhibition, which attracts craft enthusiasts from across Lancashire, opens on Monday, May 5, and runs until Monday, July 7. The exhibition followed a search by gallery staff for the best artistic and craftworking talent from across the North West. Platform Gallery supervisor Jack Shackleton said: "The Craft Open is an ideal opportunity for people to see work from the region's finest craftworkers, without having to travel to the big cities, as well as showcasing the wide range of talented and imaginative artists we have in Lancashire and the North West. "This year's exhibition attracted more entries than ever, many of them local and all of an outstanding quality, and the Craft Open is a way of bringing it together and letting people see it up close in a local setting." The Platform Gallery is open Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm, Saturdays 10am to 4.30pm and Sundays 11am to 4pm.

Further details about the Craft Open are available on 01200 425566.

Funding puts exercise in a spin at town's leisure centre

MEMBERS of Roefield Leisure Centre in Clitheroe are in a spin thanks to a funding boost. The centre has received £80,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Ribble Valley Borough Council to create a 'spinning hub'. The hub, which boasts 27 spinning machines, as well as specialist lighting and a large screen, has proved a hit with users of all ages. Roefield manager David Potts said: "Since it opened the spinning hub has really taken off. "The spin machines are great fun, appeal to people of all ages and fitness levels, and have helped us maintain our membership levels. "Spinning is a great way to burn calories and keep fit, brings people together in a fun environment and gives them control of how much effort they want to make to suit their

ability and fitness levels. "We are really grateful for this grant, which has helped to bring an important new facility to our centre." Roefield hosts 20 hours of spin classes, six days a week, at different times to suit everyone. Stuart Hirst, chairman of Ribble Valley Borough Council's community services committee, said: "It is great to see these classes being such a hit with people of all ages. "This is another council investment in the health and wellbeing of our residents and I hope the spinning hub continues to generate energy and enthusiasm for keeping fit."

► **IN A SPIN** – Roefield Leisure Centre manager David Potts (left) with Ribble Valley Deputy Mayor Simon O'Rourke.



Put your best foot forward with new 'functional fitness' class

FUNCTIONAL fitness is the name of a new class on offer by Ribble Valley Borough Council's healthy lifestyles team. The team has been helping residents get fit and active with a wide range of activities and

classes for over 20 years. Participants in a range of specialist programmes have reported improved mobility, mood, fitness and weight loss, while others say the schemes have helped them manage

chronic health conditions, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, and combat loneliness. Activities include the popular seated exercise scheme Best Foot Forward, weight management programme Weigh to Go, cardiac rehabilitation programme Heartwatch and supervised gym referrals. The team's latest class, Functional Fitness, is an exercise circuit adapted for people of differing abilities and is held weekly at Oakhill Leisure in Whalley. The council's health and fitness development officer, Tracy Balko, said: "All our classes are friendly and welcoming, and participants really support each other. "Our sessions are targeted at people new to exercise, or who need guiding in the right direction, or those with a medical or health condition, who need support. "Our team has a wealth of expertise and experience, so people can be assured that they are in safe hands!" Being more active and managing weight has many physical benefits, and people find the social aspects of joining a class or a group helpful and motivational.



▲ **FUNCTIONAL FITNESS** – Health and fitness development officer Tracy Balko leading a class at Oakhill.

For further details about the healthy lifestyles team and how they can help you get fit and active phone 01200 414586.