

RIBBLE VALLEY News

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The newspaper of Ribble Valley Borough Council

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AUTUMN 2025

Putting a positive spin on play areas

PLAY areas in Ribble Valley are in a spin after being awarded a £750,000 refurbishment boost.

And pupils at Brookside Nursery School had the time of their lives when they let rip at the Salthill play area in Clitheroe, one of the first get a makeover.

Turn to page 6 to see how the borough's sports, leisure and recreation facilities are to benefit from a £6.7million bonanza in Ribble Valley Borough Council's most ambitious capital programme since it was formed in 1974.



Household food waste collections on their way in 2026

HOUSEHOLD food waste collections are to start in Ribble Valley next year.

Ribble Valley Borough Council, along with councils across England, is to start weekly household food waste collections.

The new scheme aims to encourage people to recycle more, cut the amount of food waste dumped in landfill sites, which produce harmful methane gas, and encourage people to think more about waste when they buy food.

Households will be provided with a small kitchen

bin, known as a caddy, to collect items such as food peelings, meal leftovers and out-of-date items, which can then be emptied into a larger food bin outside the home.

Both bins have been designed with secure lids to reduce any odours or animals getting access to the food.

The council's other recycling and refuse collections will continue as normal.

Household food waste collections are being introduced by the Government across the country.

The national rollout is expected to take place from next spring, with Ribble Valley going live around the autumn.

We will work with Lancashire County Council, our waste disposal authority and national waste advisory body WRAP to ensure that the new scheme is rolled out as smoothly and effectively as possible.

Further information on this exciting new scheme will be available at ribblevalley.gov.uk over the coming months.



Did you know?

We each throw out an average of 95kg of food a year, that's 247kg per household of four people (WRAP)!



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Council chief executive calls it a day after 52 years



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£1.25million revamp of town centre and market completed



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Swimming pool to receive £3million cash splash



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New scheme to promote fun and games is child's play

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Ribble Valley News

Rare rural affordable housing scheme takes shape in Ribble Valley

THE first entirely affordable rural housing scheme in Ribble Valley and one of only a few in the UK is taking shape.

The Crow Trees Farm development in Chatburn will feature 37 properties, all for affordable social rent and shared ownership, by households with a combined income of up to £80,000, depending on the tenure, with priority given to those with a strong Chatburn connection.

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

All new housing developments in Ribble Valley 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.

And while entirely affordable schemes aren't uncommon in urban areas, the Crow Trees Farm development, comprising five bungalows, eight flats, 10 two-bedroom, 10 three-bedroom and four four-bedroom houses, all of them available at an affordable tenure, is rare in a rural location.

The scheme is being developed by social housing provider MSV Housing, with the support of Ribble Valley Borough Council and funding from Government agency Homes England.

Shared ownership allows you to buy between 25 and 75 per cent of a property, with an affordable rent on the remainder, while social rent properties are available for rent below the market value.

Mark Hindle, chairman of Ribble Valley Borough Council's health and housing committee, said: "The provision of

affordable housing is one of the most pressing issues facing the council, particularly in rural areas, and this Chatburn scheme is a one-off.

"Affordable housing is an ideal way for some residents to access the housing market and we are delighted that these high-quality properties are becoming available in a village location where affordable properties are virtually non-existent.

"We would like to thank MSV Housing Group and Homes England for bringing this much-needed scheme to fruition."

Stuart Smallman, head of growth at MSV Housing Group, said: "We are proud to be delivering these Chatburn homes in association with our partners Pringle Homes, Ribble Valley Borough Council and Homes England.

"Crow Trees Farm will provide a rare opportunity for local people, who would otherwise be priced out of the housing market, to access high-quality affordable homes in a rural setting."

Ribble Valley Borough Council works closely with several social housing providers to provide affordable housing and 96 affordable homes were completed in the borough last year.

Further properties for affordable rent, shared ownership, or exclusively for the over-55s, will be available to local households on the affordable housing register over the coming months at Higher Standen in Clitheroe and Whalley Manor.

MSV Housing also currently has two-bedroom apartments for shared ownership sale at Sheepfold Crescent in Barrow, with shares starting from just 10 per cent. If you are interested in viewing a property, email buy@msvhousing.co.uk.



▲ **TAKING SHAPE** – Louise Edge, deputy-chairman of Ribble Valley Borough Council's health and housing committee; Stuart Smallman, head of growth at MSV Housing Group, and MSV development officer Sophie Stuart.

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



£1.25million revamp of Clitheroe town centre and market is completed

A £1million revamp of Clitheroe town centre featuring a raft of on-street improvements has been completed.

And a £250,000 spruce-up of the Clitheroe Market bullring has also been completed on time and to budget.

Over £700,000 of improvements to 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 year.

The work was part of a public realm improvement project undertaken by Lancashire County Council and Ribble Valley Borough Council.

The revamp was so successful that the two councils gave the thumbs-up to a £300,000 extension of the scheme into Market Place, also featuring new footways, signage, benches, bollards and street furniture, and resurfacing.

The recent Clitheroe Market bullring spruce-up features new flagging and street furniture, along with LED lighting, roof panels, gutters and back panels on permanent stalls, and new

laminated tabletops on temporary stalls. The improvements were funded by Ribble Valley Borough Council and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Borough council leader Simon Hore said: "The Castle Street refurbishment has been warmly received by residents and shoppers, and the extension of those improvements have given Market Place a similar bright new look.

"The Castle Street and Market Place schemes, along with £250,000 we have invested in the market bullring, are helping to make Clitheroe an even more attractive place to visit."

Clitheroe has hosted a regular market since 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.

Stalls and pitches at the market are available for as little as £10.60 a day. Further details are available from Ribble Valley Borough Council on 01200 425111.



▲ **SITTING PRETTY** – Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Simon Hore (right) and Warren Goldsworthy, LCC cabinet member for highways and transport.



▲ **PHENOMENAL** – one of more than 100 exhibitors at the festival.

'Phenomenal' food festival smashes visitor numbers as planning starts for next year

More than 25,000 food enthusiasts converged on Clitheroe for this year's annual food festival.

And organisers Ribble Valley Borough Council are already looking ahead to make it even better in 2026.

Demand was so high this year that the festival's park-and-ride scheme was full by mid-morning and many producers were sold out by lunchtime, and had to send for additional stock, while street food vendors attracted long queues throughout the day.

And town centre shops also got a slice of the pie, with many reporting increased footfall and sales, notably from first-time visitors to the town.

The festival, sponsored by the Compleat Food Group and Fort Vale Engineering, showcased some of the UK's best food

and drink – from wild game and Biltong beef to cheese truckles and curry kits – from over 100 exhibitors.

It was the culmination of a week-long Taste Fest celebration of food and drink at locations across the borough

Ricky Newmark, chairman of the council's economic development committee, said: "This year's Clitheroe Food Festival again attracted around 25,000 visitors which is a phenomenal achievement. We're proud to have created what has become one of the UK's premiere food festivals and are already receiving expressions of interest for next year's event."

Further details and the date of next year's festival will be available at clitheroefoodfestival.com shortly.



Have your say...

Countdown to the future of local government in Lancashire

RIBBLE Valley Borough Council could be abolished by 2028 in the biggest shake-up of local government in over 50 years. Lancashire currently has a mix of unitary and district councils, along with a county council, but the Government wants to dissolve them all – Ribble Valley Borough Council included – and replace them with single-tier authorities delivering all services. Read on to find out what these new authorities might look like and how the council is working hard to ensure any reorganisation is in your best interests.



Biggest shake-up of local government in over 50 years on the cards

RIBBLE Valley Borough Council could be abolished by 2028 in the biggest shake-up of local government in over 50 years.

Currently, Lancashire County Council provides services such as adult and children’s social care, education, roads and libraries, while district councils take the lead on services such as recycling and refuse collection, planning, housing and leisure.

Unitary authorities in Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen deliver all of their services.

The Government wants to dissolve councils in Lancashire and replace them with single-tier authorities delivering all services.

Parish and town councils will not be affected by the proposed changes.

Lancashire’s 15 councils are now working together to develop proposals for what these new authorities might

look like.

A range of options for the creation of two to five unitary councils in Lancashire are being considered, which you can see set out on this page.

The proposals must demonstrate:

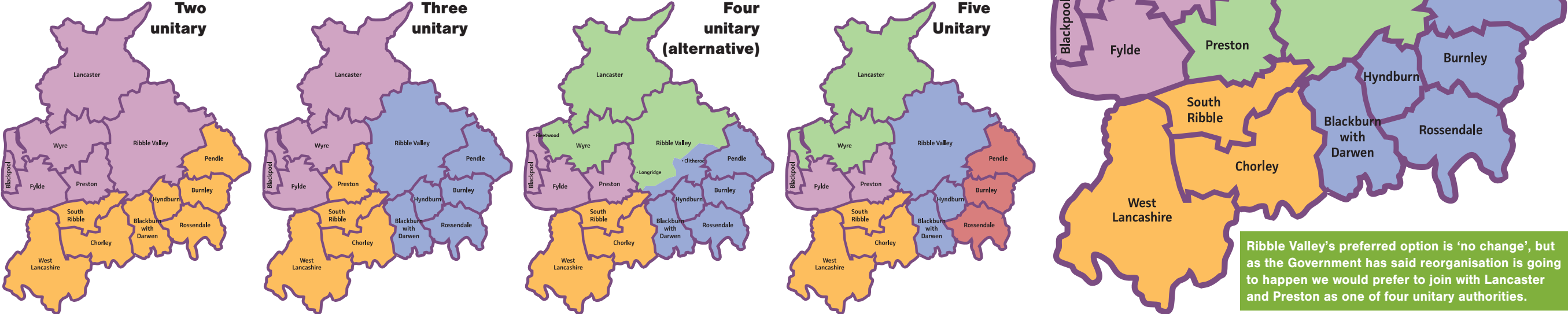
- Stronger local leadership
- Improved service delivery and outcomes
- Value for money and financial sustainability
- Economic growth and prosperity
- Community identity and effective local partnerships

A survey on the proposed reorganisation was due to close as Ribble Valley News went to press, but early indications are that a significant number of respondents would prefer local government in Lancashire to stay the same.

This is also the view of Ribble Valley councillors across the chamber, but if reorganisation does go ahead the council would prefer to join with Lancaster and Preston to create a new unitary authority.

Councillors feel it will:

- Protect Ribble Valley’s proven record of providing top-quality public services
- Provide a strong rural base of Ribble Valley and Lancaster with the Forest of Bowland AONB at its heart, encouraging further tourism and investment
- Improve university links between Lancaster and Preston
- Create closer links to a strong and thriving economic area based around Preston, including leading companies such as BAE Systems
- Include major transport links, such as the M6 and West Coast mainline



Merger with Preston and Lancaster best option for Ribble Valley, councillors say

LOCAL government reorganisation could create a ‘democratic deficit’ Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Simon Hore has warned.

But if reorganisation is to go ahead councillors feel a Preston, Lancaster and Ribble Valley unitary authority is in the best interests of the borough.

The leader said: “The Government has asked us to scrap a system of local government that has been in place for 50 years, which is quite a challenge.

“Consolidating district councils into larger authorities brings the danger of a potential ‘democratic deficit’, with local accountability and representation taken out of the hands of 40 local councillors living in the areas they know and serve to just a remote handful under a much broader structure.

“We are proud to have delivered high-class, cost-effective services to our residents since the council’s creation in 1974.

“We will continue to work with our partners across Lancashire to help shape the future of local government, but won’t let that distract us from continuing to deliver core services and investment in schemes and programmes that benefit local people.

“It is vital that, whatever the future council looks like, the best interests of Ribble Valley residents and businesses take priority.

“I would encourage our residents to take part in the

Government’s consultation in early 2026 to make your feelings and views known.”

Ribble Valley’s preferred option is ‘no change’ to local government, a view shared by councillors across the chamber.

But as the Government has indicated that reorganisation is likely to happen, Ribble Valley Borough Council would prefer to join with Preston and Lancaster.

Councillor Hore added: “We feel joining with Preston and Lancaster would be the ‘best fit’ for a predominantly rural area like Ribble Valley in order to protect public services and the borough’s distinct identity, and if you agree make sure to have your say in the Government consultation next spring.”



Council came into being at the same time as Ceefax and Abba

RIBBLE Valley Borough Council came into being following the 1974 overhaul of local government, the same year that the BBC launched Ceefax and Abba won the Eurovision Song Contest with Waterloo.

And the first task facing the new council was to build offices in Clitheroe (pictured right).

The reorganisation saw the country divided into ‘districts’, one of which, Ribble Valley, at 225 square miles, was the largest geographically in Lancashire, but with the smallest population, at the time less than 50,000 residents.

Since then, Ribble Valley has become one of the most successful boroughs in the country, with high customer satisfaction rates and an outstanding record in financial management.

It has one of the lowest district council taxes in the UK and is the only authority in Lancashire to collect refuse weekly, and not charge for green waste.

And this year councillors unanimously agreed to slash proposed timetables for spending an estimated £6.7million on capital projects from five years to just two.

As well as £3million for essential maintenance works at Ribblesdale Pool, £1.7million for a raft of new features at Clitheroe Castle, £550,000 for improvements to the castle keep and £1.45million for all-weather sports pitches in Clitheroe, Langho and Longridge, every one of the borough’s 18 council-owned play areas will receive improvements and in some cases, such as Salthill in Clitheroe and John Smith’s in Longridge, a complete revamp, while a whole new play area will be built at Edisford riverbank next year.

The council has also marked its 50th anniversary by planting 50 carbon-busting giant redwoods at sites throughout the borough.

Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Simon Hore said: “We may be a small district authority, but we have no debt, significant reserves, the lowest district council tax in Lancashire and one of the lowest in the UK.



“At the same time, we have launched an ambitious capital programme and are still the only authority in Lancashire to collect refuse weekly and not charge for green waste.

“But it is not just our financial record that is outstanding – we are also the fifth healthiest borough in the UK and the safest in the North West, according to recent ONS figures.

“And over the years we have delivered a raft of groundbreaking and award-winning schemes from multi-million-pound redevelopment projects to the

resurgence in regional food and drink.

“These are significant achievements built on many years of careful financial management, as well as the skill and dedication of staff across the authority, who know their jobs inside out and deliver first-class services.

“Councillors across the chamber will work hard to ensure Ribble Valley has a bright future and our residents and businesses will continue to receive the services they appreciate and value over the next 50 years.”

Ho ho ho! Free festive parking in Clitheroe and Longridge

FREE festive parking is on offer at four council car parks in Clitheroe and Longridge on Saturdays in the run-up to Christmas.

The parking is available from 9.30am at the Lowergate, Market and Railway View (council offices) car parks in Clitheroe and the Barclay Road car park in Longridge on Saturday, December 6, 13 and 20.

The giveaway is part of the council’s annual festive business boost aimed at attracting shoppers to the borough.

Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Simon Hore said: “We have been offering free festive parking at our main car parks for some years now and the initiative has proved a great success.

“A lot of hard work goes into making

Christmas in Ribble Valley special and this year is no exception.

“We are offering the free parking, so that festive shoppers can see what our unique, independent shops and market have to offer, including high-quality gifts and produce, often at prices that astound.”

The free parking is intended for shoppers only, not traders or town centre workers, and other municipal car parks are not included.

Information on the locations of Ribble Valley Borough Council car parks is available at ribblevalley.gov.uk.



Changes to festive recycling and refuse collection

HOUSEHOLDS in Ribble Valley are advised of changes to recycling and refuse collection over the festive period.

The changes are:

Usual collection date (rearranged date)

- Monday, December 22 (Saturday 20)
- Tuesday 23 (Monday 22)
- Christmas Eve (Tuesday 23)
- Christmas Day (Wednesday 24)
- Boxing Day (Saturday 27)
- Monday 29, Tuesday 30 and Wednesday 31 (no change)
- New Year’s Day (Friday 2)
- Friday 2 (Saturday 3)

Normal refuse collection will resume the week beginning Monday, January 5.

Christmas wrap, cards and packaging can be recycled and put in your white sack for collection the weeks beginning December 22 (if your paper is collected on a green bin week) or December 29 (if it is collected on a blue bin week).



Further information is available at ribblevalley.gov.uk or 01200 425111.

I’m dreaming of a green Christmas:

- ❖ Britons will eat more than 175million mince pies this Christmas – their foil cases can be recycled
- ❖ More than 19,000 tonnes of turkey will be consumed over Christmas, much of it packaged in recyclable foil trays
- ❖ The UK will consume over five million jars of mincemeat, 12 million jars of pickles and six million jars of cranberries – recycling the jars can save enough energy to boil the water for 60million cups of tea
- ❖ Over 83 square kilometres of wrapping paper will be thrown away in the UK over Christmas, enough to gift wrap Hyde Park 33 times – wrapping paper can be shredded, recycled and even used to clean windows



Ribble Valley is the ideal place to work, rest and play

Whether you're eight or 80 there's something for everyone to help keep you fit and active.

Getting out and about and keeping active, however you do it, is the key to a long and healthy life.

We're making major improvements to our leisure facilities to make sure they are fit

for today's and future generations to enjoy. Some of that work will be obvious, some might not be quite so eye-catching, but taken together they mark a significant investment.

Read on to find out how Ribble Valley is becoming the ideal place to work rest or play.



Clitheroe Castle keeps looking to the future

Clitheroe Castle has looked out over its grounds and the wider town for centuries.

But as well as preserving the past the future of the grounds immediately outside its walls are coming into focus over the coming months.

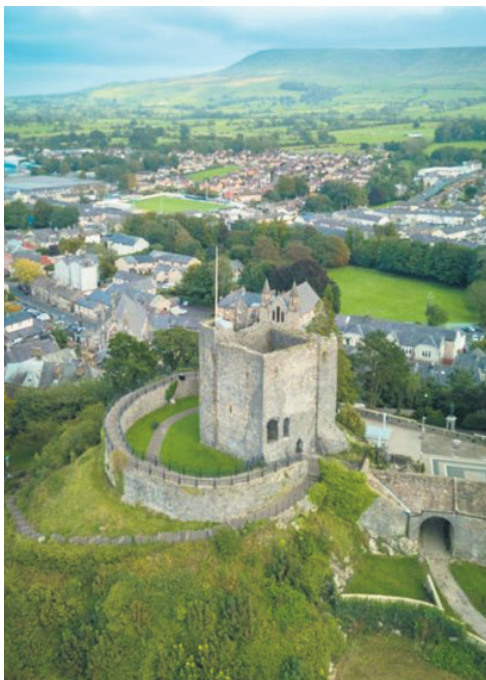
Clitheroe Castle will see a £1.5million top-up to funds already pledged for ongoing structural works at the castle keep, along with new benches, bins, bollards and signposts; upgraded pathways, roads and steps; the painting of railings and gates across the entire 16-acre site, as well as a revamp of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

Money will be spent on preserving the castle keep itself, including fixing stonework, new flashing to prevent water damage, and cutting back some foliage to reveal more of the building.

Ribble Valley Borough Council is also investing in providing modern health and leisure facilities in the surrounding park, including developing an outdoor gym where the former tennis courts used to be and improvements to the multi-use games area and skatepark.

Stuart Hirst, chairman of the council's community services committee, said: "The castle and the surrounding park brings people of all ages together and it's important that we continue to invest in their future.

"Maintaining the historic keep as well as investing in improving the facilities around it will help ensure they continue to be an attractive and fun place to visit for years to come."



▲ **KING OF THE CASTLE** – the historic landmark has dominated the area for centuries.

Play areas in Ribble Valley flying high after receiving £750,000 cash boost

PLAY areas in Ribble Valley are flying high after being awarded a £750,000 cash boost.

The funds are topping up existing capital allocations aimed at bringing the borough's play areas to a high standard within two years.

The boost is part of a £6.7million cash bonanza for sports, leisure and recreation facilities in Ribble Valley Borough Council's biggest and most ambitious capital programme since it was formed in 1974.

Councillors unanimously agreed to slash proposed timetables for spending an estimated £6.7million on capital projects from five years to just two.

As well as £3million for essential maintenance work to Ribblesdale Swimming Pool, £1.7million for a raft of new features at Clitheroe Castle, £550,000 for improvements to the castle keep and £1.45million for all-weather sports pitches in Clitheroe, Lango and Longridge, the borough's council-owned play areas will receive improvements, such as resurfacing and where possible new equipment, and in some cases such as at Salthill in Clitheroe and John Smith's in Longridge, a complete revamp, while a whole new play area will be built at Edisford riverbank.

Stuart Hirst, chairman of the council's community services committee, said: "Given uncertainty around the future of local government we want to make sure that our resources are spent locally.

"Our reserves have been modestly accrued over many years and whatever the future holds for Ribble Valley, councillors across the chamber are united in their view that they be spent entirely for the benefit of the borough's current and future residents.

"What better way to do that than to invest in the borough's play areas for our children for years to come."



▲ **POWER SLIDE** – our play areas are taking off thanks to our investment programme, as these Brookside Nursery pupils found out.

£3million cash splash will future proof town's popular swimming pool

RIBBLESDALE swimming pool in Clitheroe is to receive a £3million investment in its future.

The scheme will feature essential maintenance works, including mechanical and electrical improvements, new boilers, ventilation and filtration systems, and a specialist survey of the pool tank.

Once completed, the essential works won't be obvious but they will future-proof the pool for use by the next generation of young Ribble Valley swimmers and their families.

Like an iceberg only a small part of the work will be visible to visitors; the rest will be out of sight, some of it literally underwater. But no, there won't be actual icebergs in the pool!

The project is part of a wider programme of spending on sports, leisure and recreation facilities across the borough.

Stuart Hirst, chairman of Ribble Valley Borough Council's community services committee, said: "Ribblesdale Pool is an extremely popular facility, which has served generations of local swimmers, but it is suffering from wear and tear and is subject to spiralling energy costs.

"We want to ensure that essential maintenance works at the pool are undertaken as soon as possible next year. There will be an unavoidable closure of the pool while the work goes on but it will ensure its long-term future."

Without this work, there is a danger that the 50-year-old pool would have to close due to plant and equipment failure.

Consultants Alliance Leisure are currently drawing up designs and



▲ **MAKING A SPLASH** – 50-year-old Ribblesdale Pool needs essential work to ensure its long-term future.

costings for the work required and a final decision will be made early next year on when the work will be done. The scheme is expected to take around six months to complete.

Further details will be available at ribblevalley.gov.uk early next year.



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.

Council offices solar panels plugging into energy savings

MORE than 100 solar panels have been installed at the Ribble Valley Borough Council offices in Clitheroe in a bid to save energy running costs and reduce the council's carbon footprint.

The offices spent most of the summer covered in scaffolding as contractors fitted raised brackets on several roof slopes that regularly catch the sun.

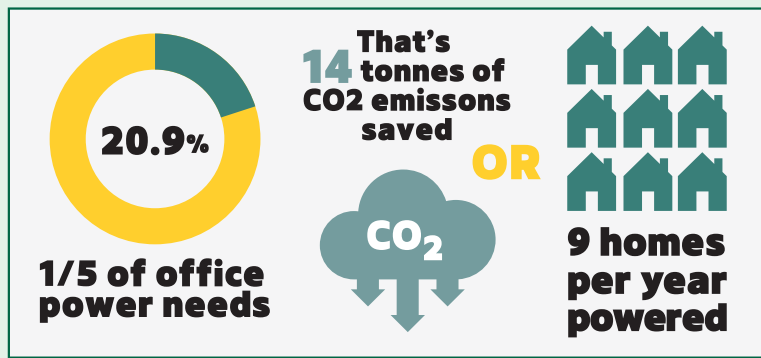
Around 115 solar panels, together with associated wiring, were fitted which will now provide electrical power to the building.

As well as saving money on energy bills (around £1million over 25 years), the panels will also help protect the local environment by cutting harmful emissions.

It's estimated they will provide one-fifth (20.9 percent) of the offices' power needs, as well as cutting almost 14 tonnes of CO2 emissions every year – equivalent to driving a petrol car more than twice around the world



▲ POWERING UP – the panels will power the council offices with any excess going back to the National Grid.



or by using enough electricity to power nine homes over a whole year.

Ricky Newmark, chairman of the council's climate change working group, said: "This is a long-term investment in providing sustainable energy that will help cut our energy bills, making savings that can be used elsewhere to support our residents."

The work was carried out as part of the council's commitment to support the development of renewable energy schemes provided they don't cause unacceptable harm to the local environment.

Council is charging ahead with EV power to the people in rural areas

WHEN it comes to the provision of electric vehicle (EV) charging points in rural areas we are charging ahead.

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.

And Sabden is the latest village to receive one of the charging points.

The trend of motorists switching to electric cars is predicted to increase over the coming years as the sale of new petrol and diesel cars is phased out.

And one in three of respondents to the 2023 Ribble Valley People's Survey said they now 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 vehicles.

So we are accelerating moves to provide EV charging points across the borough, particularly in rural areas.

Ricky Newmark, chairman of the 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



▲ CHARGING AHEAD – Ricky Newmark (left) with the council's community services director Adam Allen at the new Sabden EV charging point.

easier for people to reduce their carbon footprint and 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."

Up to £15,000 to help our first-time homebuyers get cosy

CALLING all first-time homebuyers in Ribble Valley – up to £15,000 is available to help you make your property more energy-efficient or undertake crucial renovations.

The First-Time Buyer Grant aims to address housing affordability, as well as tackle climate change.

The grants will help first-time buyers currently purchasing a property, or who have bought a house within the last two years, make it more energy-efficient or address significant disrepair.

To qualify, properties must be over 10 years old, in the council tax bands A to C and located in Ribble Valley.

They must have an energy performance certificate of D to H and the proposed works must increase the rating to C or above.

Applicants must be a first-time buyer aged 18 or over, with a Ribble Valley connection and income under £60,000, or combined household income under £80,000, and intend occupying the property as their main residence.

Rachael Stott, the council's housing strategy officer, said: "We have the highest house price to income ratio in Lancashire and one of the highest in England, which is forcing many young people out of the communities they grew up in.

"This funding will enable first-time buyers with a local connection to consider purchasing properties in need of renovation at the lower end of the market, rather than just new-builds.

"The grants are also available for properties purchased within the last two years and already occupied that need significant repairs or works identified on their energy performance certificate, which will ensure they are energy-efficient at a time of spiralling energy costs."

The size of the grant depends on the cost of the works required and is at the council's discretion.

The grants will cover 50 per cent of the cost of the works up to a maximum of £15,000 and works already underway or completed will not qualify.



Further details and application packs are available at ribblevalley.gov.uk



Having fun at any age is child’s play

“IT’S child’s play” goes the saying – and an initiative being introduced in our borough is out to prove just that.

ParkPlay is a bit like Parkrun, but with the emphasis even more on fun and games, and the aim is to see this exciting new idea introduced in rural communities across Ribble Valley.

ParkPlay, which is supported by Ribble Valley Borough Council, is a national scheme that aims to “build happier, healthier communities nationwide through the life-changing power of play.”

Supervised play sessions for children and adults of all ages are held every Saturday morning to bring communities and generations together, improve mental and physical health, and increase confidence and skills.

A scheme has been up and running in Dunsop Bridge for a year and another has recently launched in Hurst Green. Three other schemes are planned for Ribble Valley at locations yet to be decided, depending on whether enough local support can be found.

Matt Donnelly, who helped launch the Dunsop Bridge scheme and is now ParkPlay’s Ribble Valley lead, said: “We decided to team up with ParkPlay as we had been meeting up on a Saturday morning, but needed the extra support, which Park Play provided perfectly.

“We were the most rural ParkPlay to begin, but it was needed to get social activity out in our Villages, members of the community got involved to help which makes it so special.

“Other villages were interested in what had been achieved in Dunsop Bridge which is why we decided to commit to more schemes. I think it’s a fantastic opportunity for the villages and community groups.”



▲ ON THE BALL – Ir Tracy Balko (left) with Matt Donnelly and Harriet McCartney from Together an Active Future practice some play skills.

How it works:

- ParkPlay provides training and support for play leaders, including first aid and carries out the appropriate DBS and other safeguarding checks
- ParkPlay also provides a “starter kit” of equipment and play ideas
- Play leaders are supported by local volunteers who help staff the sessions – all must be aged 18 or over
- Parents have to stay with their kids – it’s not a creche or youth club
- The sessions are free and last two hours and can be held on any open space or play area that’s suitable – with the owner’s permission

Tracy Balko, the council’s health and fitness development officer, said: “The emphasis is always on having fun, no matter what age you are. It’s a great way of bringing people together in their local community.

“It’s also a great chance for volunteers who have an interest in sport or leisure as a future career and want to gain experience and skills that they can use to access training or work opportunities.”

The hope is to establish other ParkPlay sessions in outlying communities, but the schemes will also be a success if they have local support and that means people willing to lead and staff them. Organisers are trying to find enough people to be able to launch other schemes.

Further information about the local ParkPlay schemes and how to get involved is available from Tracy on 01200 414662 or www.park-play.com



Jubilee Trail offers best of Ribble Valley and a breathtaking challenge

DID you know that there’s a 65-mile circular walk that takes in the best of Ribble Valley?

The Jubilee Trail is a walker’s dream and hopes are that it will attract visitors from a wide area as well as providing a way for you to explore some of the lesser-known corners of the borough.

Split into seven sections, the Jubilee Trail links scenic villages with rolling countryside and wild moors, as well as taking in the summit of the iconic Pendle Hill.

Why not “tick off” each section individually or, if you fancy a sterner test aim to complete them all over several consecutive days if you’re an experienced hiker?



▲ HILLS AND VALLEYS – A view of the beautiful countryside trail walkers will see on the section between Newton-in-Bowland and Dunsop Bridge.

More information is available online at www.ribblevalley.gov.uk or digital mapping and downloads are available via popular walking apps including OutdoorActive and OS Maps.



Longridge’s £100,000 pump track is a runaway success

A TOP-NOTCH £100,000 Longridge pump track is proving a runaway success with young cyclists within weeks of being opened.

Ribble Valley Mayor Simon O’Rourke watched Longridge youngsters master their moves at the track, which was 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 was 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 is behind some of the best tracks in the world.

The Mayor said: “The pump track has quickly become a great asset for Longridge and is providing a fun facility for people of all ages, particularly youngsters, to use and enjoy on their doorstep, rather than having to travel to Preston or Blackburn.

“We are delighted to have worked with the Longridge community and Velosolutions to bring this fabulous facility to fruition.”

Local resident David Marsh, who campaigned for the track and contributed to its design, added: “I would like to thank everyone who helped bring the scheme to fruition, particularly late borough councillor Brian Holden, who played an instrumental role in its inception.

“The track is already a much-valued community asset attracting youngsters from throughout the town.”

Nicola Hopkins, the council’s director of economic development and planning, said: “The community played a key role in shaping the track, which features an advanced jump line for experienced riders, while remaining accessible to all skill levels and abilities.

“We are excited to see it become a hub for the community and



▲ TOP GEAR – Longridge Pump track user Leo Hyde, with (from the left) Ribble Valley Borough Council’s director of economic development and planning Nicola Hopkins, Longridge resident David Marsh and Ribble Valley Mayor Simon O’Rourke.

look forward to the positive impact it will have on Longridge.” 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 and develop balance and handling skills in a safe environment away from traffic and other dangers.

The Longridge track is 175 metres long, two metres wide and features bumps and berms up to 1.8 metres high. As well as bicycles, it is suitable for scooters, rollerblades, skateboards and wheelchairs. Grass, wildflowers and native trees have been planted in and around the track to help it blend in with its setting.

Northern Star festive exhibition shines brightly at Platform Gallery

AN exhibition and sale of the best of British craft by more than 30 artists is underway at the Platform Gallery, Clitheroe, in the run-up to Christmas.

The annual Northern Star festive exhibition helps make buying the perfect homemade gift for your loved ones even easier during the gift-giving season.

A wide range of ceramics, glass, wood, jewellery, metalwork and prints are on display at the gallery, next to Clitheroe railway station. Jack Shackleton, one of the gallery’s supervisors, said: “The exhibition aims to delight and inspire visitors to discover perfect handmade gifts while supporting British craftmakers.

“It’s an ideal opportunity to pick up a gift with a difference that you won’t find anywhere else.”

The Platform Gallery is open Monday-Friday 10am to 4.30pm; Saturday 10am-4pm; and Sunday 11am-4pm until Christmas Day when it will close for the festive break.

Northern Star will run at the Platform Gallery until January 10 2026. Find us on Facebook @theplatformgallery



▲ YOU’RE A STAR – one of the eye-catching exhibits.