

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 9

meeting date: THURSDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 2017
title: REQUEST FOR CONTRIBUTION TO THE ANNUAL HEDGELAYING EVENT
submitted by: JOHN HEAP – DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: DAVID HEWITT – COUNTRYSIDE OFFICER

1 PURPOSE

1.1 For Committee to consider a request from the Lancashire & Westmorland Hedgelaying Association for a contribution of £2000 to the annual hedgelaying event to be held on the 4 March 2017 at West Bradford, in the Ribble Valley.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – To protect and enhance the environmental quality of our area.
- Corporate Priorities – To support objectives of the Forest of Bowland Management Plan designed to protect and enhance traditional boundaries. To support the objectives of the Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Other Considerations – None.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 A journey through the Ribble Valley shows just how important hedges are in this area hand-in-hand with their landscape value a strong and healthy hedge can also act as an effective stock barrier whilst providing food and shelter for a wide range of wildlife, from birds to small mammals.

2.2 Every hedge needs to be maintained if it is to be of any use for stock proofing; these days land is being used for a diverse range of activities, these uses place a different emphasis on hedges as stock proof boundaries and as a consequence a number methods of controlling hedges have become widely used including coppicing, flailing and the traditional method of hedgelaying.

2.3 Hedgelaying is a skilled method of rejuvenating overgrown hedges and is still the only sure way of keeping a hedge impenetrable to cattle and sheep; in addition a properly managed hedge is a valuable wildlife corridor providing connectivity with other habitats.

2.4 Each area of the country has a different style of Hedgelaying which has been developed over many years in order to cope with the climate of the area and the different species and types of trees and shrubs that grow in the hedge. The Lancashire & Westmorland style is needed for both sheep and cattle.

2.5 Held annually for the past 15 years around February/March, this year it is being held at Laneside Farm, West Bradford on the 4 March, between 9.00am and 3.00pm, by kind

permission of William and Mary Horner. A location that provides an appropriate location for an event designed to test the skills of all who are participating and to demonstrate the importance of traditional boundaries.

- 2.6 The event forms part of the Westmorland Hedgelaying Association's Grand Prix calendar organised by Lancashire County Council, Ribble Valley Borough Council and the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The competition itself has three classes – Championship, Novice and Open, and attracts both highly skilled practitioners and those new to hedgelaying.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – There is a budget available to pay this contribution on the Countryside Management Cost Centre, a contribution of £2000 was made in the 2015/16 financial year.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None.
- Political – None.
- Reputation – As a signatory to the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan and the Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan the Council's reputation for supporting environmental enhancement and protection is upheld.
- Equality & Diversity – None.

5 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

5.1 Approve the request for a £2000 contribution to the Lancashire & Westmorland Hedgelaying Association laying event being held at West Bradford.

DAVID HEWITT
COUNTRYSIDE OFFICER

JOHN HEAP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS/DVD

A copy of a DVD on the hedgelaying competition held on the Downham Estate is available to any Member who may be interested. Please contact David Hewitt for a copy.

For further information please ask for David Hewitt, Countryside Officer, extension 4505.

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