

RIBBLE VALLEY News



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The newspaper of Ribble Valley Borough Council

Autumn 2016

Festive shoppers invited to follow the star



● **STAR GIRL:** Singer Ella Shaw, who reached last year's final of Britain's Got Talent, will be one of the main attractions at Northern Star

SHOPPERS from across Lancashire are invited to follow their star to Clitheroe this Christmas for a festive extravaganza.

Northern Star will feature unique festive goods and live entertainment at Clitheroe Market on four consecutive Saturdays from November 26, including a Christmas lights switch-on by 'Northern star' songstress Ella Shaw, while the nearby Platform Gallery will exhibit unique work from over 50 artists and makers from across the UK from October 22 to January 7.

Heather Coar, Ribble Valley

Borough Council's head of environmental health, said: "We are going all-out to ensure Clitheroe is the place to be for festive shoppers this Christmas.

"We are inviting them to forget the hustle and bustle of the city, and come to Clitheroe for a unique shopping experience among some of the best craft makers and independent shops in the North West."

Further details and a Northern Star programme will be available at ribblevalley.gov.uk over the coming weeks.



RIO HERO TO BE HONOURED

SAWLEY canoe ace Jon Schofield surged his way to success at the Rio Olympics.

And Ribble Valley Borough Council is to honour the double-Olympian with a specially commissioned commemorative coffee set thrown by top potter Matt Wilcock.

Jon, who has been supported by Ribble Valley Borough Council's sports and arts excellence grants scheme, secured second place in the kayak pairs 200m sprint at the Lagoa Stadium.

Jon and kayak partner Liam Heath took silver after beating Lithuanian duo Aurimas Lankas and Edvinas Ramanauskas in a split-second photo-finish.

Ribble Valley Mayor Joyce Holgate said: "Ribble Valley Borough Council is immensely proud to have supported Jon over the years and is thrilled with his success.

"For him to have won bronze at London 2012 was fantastic enough, but to top that with a silver at Rio is outstanding. It was a nail-biting finish and I was cheering him on in front

of my television set."

Jon Schofield (right) said: "The competition at Rio was fierce and we worked hard prior to the Games on lowering our stroke rate and getting the most out of each stroke.

"We have got a lot stronger since the London Olympics and are thrilled with our silver medal in Rio.

"I would like to thank Ribble Valley Borough Council for its help and support over the years, which is invaluable to young sportsmen and women."

Ribble Valley Borough Council has commissioned top potter Matt Wilcock, who won last year's surprise TV hit the Great Pottery Throw Down, to produce a commemorative coffee set for budding barista Jon.

Matt has been exhibiting his innovative pottery, which marries technical ability with astonishing artistry, at the Platform Gallery in Clitheroe.

● Turn to page 8 for further details of Ribble Valley Borough Council's sports and arts excellence grants scheme.



in Clitheroe town centre, in which the council will retain ownership of the land.

"We anticipate the scheme will stimulate further investment, jobs and growth over the coming years by securing a number of high-quality retail and leisure operators not currently represented in the town.

"However, the scheme has to be right for Clitheroe and the council has decided to undertake its own

comprehensive consultation prior to any plans being brought forward for consideration."

A cross-party working group has held an initial meeting and further details on how to take part in the consultation will be made public over the coming weeks.

Further details of the consultation will be available at ribblevalley.gov.uk soon.

Public to have a say over market

A PUBLIC consultation into the proposed £9million redevelopment of the Clitheroe Market site has been launched.

The consultation will be overseen by a cross-party working group chaired by Ribble Valley Borough Council deputy leader Terry Hill.

Nelson contractor, investor and developer Barnfield Construction was selected to devise a scheme to redevelop the 1.4 acre site last year following a rigorous selection process.

The aim of the three-year scheme is to bring a new lease of life to the town and attract top new retailers and significant economic development.

Draft proposals attracted concern from some sections of the community during an initial public consultation by Barnfield Construction, as a result of which the council has decided to run its own comprehensive consultation to ensure the scheme is widely accepted by stakeholders and residents.

Terry Hill (right) said: "This is a significant opportunity to bring modern retail and leisure facilities to Clitheroe town centre and Barnfield's plans are ambitious.

"The project constitutes one of the biggest ever private sector investments

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Fly-tippers face big fines

FLY-TIPPERS in Ribble Valley face hefty £400 on-the-spot fines under tough new measures.

Ribble Valley Borough Council is launching a crackdown on people who foul its backstreets and country lanes.

Local authorities have been given greater powers to tackle fly-tipping by issuing penalty notices of between £150 and £400 to those caught dumping anything from old fridges and sofas to garden waste and rubble.

Introducing fixed penalty notices for fly-tipping is the latest move in a Government crackdown on waste crime, which costs the UK millions of pounds a year in clean-up costs, undermines legitimate business, blights the countryside and is a public health risk.

Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Stuart Hirst said: "Fly-tipping is a blight. It starts with a small pile of rubble, or a couple of bin bags, but then more rubbish is dumped and, before you know it, half a house clearance has been left.

"Some of our backstreets and country lanes are becoming an eyesore and we are determined to tackle it.

"Our environment is too lovely to trash

and anyone caught fly-tipping is going to feel it in their back pocket."

Environment Minister Rory Stewart added: "It is beyond me that anyone feels it is acceptable to dump waste in the countryside.

"This new fixed penalty notice will provide Ribble Valley Borough Council with another tool to tackle selfish individuals who blight communities and ruin our beautiful landscape."

According to the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, fly-tipping occurs every 12 seconds in the UK, costing taxpayers over £100million a year to clean up.

As well as the new fixed penalty



● SICK AND TYRED: Ribble Valley councillor Peter Ainsworth at a tyre dump in his Clayton-le-Dale ward, with a Clitheroe asbestos dump (inset)



notices, local authorities can prosecute large-scale waste criminals, who face up to five years imprisonment.

Local residents who witness fly-tipping are asked to report a vehicle's registration number in complete confidence to Ribble Valley Borough Council on 01200 425111.

Don't lose your voice: register now to vote

RIBBLE Valley residents who have not yet registered to vote are advised to do so without delay if they want to have their say in next year's county elections.

Sweeping changes to the way residents registered to vote were introduced in 2014. Previously, one person in every household was responsible for registering everyone who lived at their address, but under the new system, called individual electoral registration, or IER, each person is now required to register to vote individually.

IER is the biggest change to electoral registration for over a century and aims to make registration more secure, simpler and faster, while protecting against voting fraud.

Residents were automatically transferred from the old to the new register during a transition period that ended last December, since which residents not registered under IER have been removed.

Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Stuart Hirst said: "Elections are fundamental to our democratic way of life, but if you are not registered you can't vote and if you don't vote you can't have a say in how things are run."

Further details are available from Ribble Valley Borough Council's electoral registration team on 01200 414411, or to register to vote visit gov.uk.



Deadline looms for flood grants

OVER 100 Ribble Valley households and businesses affected by the December floods have received grants totalling £414,000 to protect their properties from future flooding.

And anyone that has not yet applied for the funds is advised to do so without delay, as any work must be completed and invoices paid by December 9.

Under the Flood Resilience Grant Scheme, households and businesses affected by Storms Desmond and Eva can apply for up to £5,000 to flood-proof their properties.

The grants are intended to help home and business owners put measures in place to improve their property's resistance and resilience to flooding over and above repairs that would normally be covered by insurance.

Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Stuart Hirst said: "We have been working hard with the Government and other agencies to help homeowners and businesses get back on their feet following the December floods.

"The Flood Resilience Grant Scheme is playing a significant part in reducing the impact of future flooding on vulnerable properties and anyone who has not applied is advised to do so without delay."

The scheme funds external and internal measures aimed at keeping water out of a property, or reducing the damage caused by flooding, such as airbrick covers, sewerage bungs, toilet pan seals, non-return valves, water-resistant mortar, door guards, flood doors, raised ovens, waist-height power sockets and wall-mounted boilers, as well as the waterproofing of external walls.

Ribble Valley Borough Council can offer support in completing the grant application and further details are available from the council on 01200 425111.

● A new national freephone number, 105, has been launched for residents to report power cuts, regardless of who they buy electricity from. The number can also be used to report damage to power lines and substations.



Council leader's message

Facing up to life after Brexit vote

IN its 40-year history Ribble Valley has never conducted its business against a national context that has so completely changed in so short a time.

The Brexit vote marks a truly seismic change in our national political, social and economic life. Perhaps the only certainty is that the immediate future is uncertain and we must be realistic in assessing the potential challenges – and opportunities – that the new national direction will bring.

Inevitably, we must expect a further tightening of the fiscal belt for local government on top of the already significant reductions we have seen in the last six years. We now know that the central grant will be completely phased out by 2020, but the much-vaunted introduction of the new business rates retention scheme to replace it remains significantly lacking in detail making accurate budgeting very difficult.

Additionally, continuing Lancashire County Council cuts continue to bear down heavily on our residents and we know financial support for our waste recycling will be withdrawn in 2018.

One certainty I can promise, however, is that Ribble Valley Borough Council will continue to focus its efforts on the business in hand and ensure it continues to provide high-quality services in a competent and solvent manner, however volatile the national context.

Much concern has been expressed about the proposed development of the Clitheroe Market site and the council has listened and acted by announcing a new comprehensive, council-led consultation, which is now in progress.

The opportunity to secure a £9million investment in Clitheroe entirely funded by the private sector, but which retains the freehold of the land in public ownership, cannot be underestimated. Equally we understand that the plans must be right for Clitheroe and acceptable to stakeholders and residents alike.

It is my genuine hope that this serious and meaningful consultation will achieve both objectives and help to secure this further boost to the local economy, before any scheme goes forward for planning consideration.

There is one recent feature of our national life in which we can all take great pride. The success of Team GB in the Rio Olympics and Paralympics was truly outstanding and two Ribble Valley athletes shared the glory, with Jon Schofield taking silver in the men's kayak double 200m and Samantha Murray finishing a creditable ninth in the modern pentathlon.

Jon and Samantha are no newcomers to success, having taken bronze and silver respectively at the London 2012 Olympics. Both were supported over the years by Ribble Valley Borough Council's sports and arts excellence grants scheme, which helps youngsters excel in sport, dance, drama and music.

Turn to page 8 for information about our forthcoming round of grants and another young sportsman tipped for Tokyo 2020.

Stuart Hirst, Leader, Ribble Valley Borough Council



Best in North West for council tax collection

RESIDENTS and council staff have been praised for their sterling efforts after official figures revealed that council tax collection in Ribble Valley is the best in the North West.

Ribble Valley Borough Council collected an impressive 98.8 per cent of council tax in 2015/16 thanks to prompt payment by council taxpayers and the diligence of the council's collection team.

Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Stuart Hirst said: "Ribble Valley has the lowest council tax in the North West and one of the

best collection rates in the country.

"Council tax is vital in ensuring we continue to fund services in the borough and I would like to thank residents for their excellent payment record, and council staff for maintaining these outstanding collection rates."

Council tax bills include precepts from Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Constabulary, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service and parishes.

Ribble Valley Borough Council's share of the council tax is just nine per cent, the lowest in Lancashire and one of the lowest in the

country.

Stuart Hirst added: "This is a significant achievement built on many years of careful financial planning and management.

"I am grateful to councillors and staff for their dedication and commitment in continuing to deliver efficient and cost-effective services, while maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction."

The council's head of revenues and benefits, Mark Edmondson (left), added: "We won't rest on our laurels and our staff will continue to pursue any outstanding council tax over the coming months."

Anyone struggling to pay council tax is asked to contact Ribble Valley Borough Council on 01200 425111.

Further information about council tax and what it is used for is available at ribblevalley.gov.uk.



“

We have helped to safeguard this important service for residents

Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Stuart Hirst

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●JUST THE JOB: Stuart Hirst with Jobcentre Plus manager Louise Kellington

Clitheroe 'job centre' on schedule to open

THE Clitheroe 'job centre' is on schedule to relocate to the Ribble Valley Borough Council Offices by the end of October.

The move will safeguard the Lowergate centre, called Jobcentre Plus, meaning the 200 Ribble Valley residents who use it in person each week will not have to travel 11 miles to Blackburn at a cost of £6 per trip.

Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Stuart Hirst said: "I am delighted to say that Clitheroe Jobcentre Plus is on schedule to relocate to the council offices by the

Move represents 'value for money'

end of October.

"Our contractors have done a fantastic job in converting part of our ground floor into a new Jobcentre Plus office and reception.

"Locating the job centre at the council offices has advantages for both organisations and will be convenient for service users.

"We have worked closely with the Department for Work and Pensions

to facilitate the relocation and safeguard this important service for our residents."

Steve Johnson, Jobcentre Plus district manager, added: "Locating our services at the council offices presents opportunities for closer working, which will improve how we deliver services to the people who need them, while providing value for money for taxpayers."

Jobcentre Plus is a Government employment agency and social security office run by the Department for Work and Pensions that helps people find employment.

Have your say on boundary changes

RESIDENTS in Ribble Valley are invited to put a marker down on proposed changes to ward boundaries in the borough.

Ribble Valley Borough Council has 40 councillors and the Local Government Boundary Commission will announce in mid-November whether this is the right number.

Residents will then be able to say whether they

want to see changes to the borough's 24 ward boundaries.

The review has been triggered due to electoral inequality in some Ribble Valley wards and the commission wants each vote in the borough to carry the same weight.

Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Stuart Hirst said: "Local people know their communities best, which is why their views will be sought on a range of issues during this important review, such as what they identify as their local community and where they think ward boundaries should be.

"The views of residents will make a difference and help the commission decide a new ward pattern for Ribble Valley."

The consultation will include a dedicated website containing interactive maps, information and online forms.

Following the consultation, the commission will produce a draft proposal, which will be subject to further consultation from April to June before final recommendations are made.

Further details will be available at ribblevalley.gov.uk over the coming weeks.



Legal warning over switch to park homes

RESIDENTS thinking of selling up their bricks and mortar and moving into a mobile home are advised to think twice.

People buying so-called 'park homes' face being forced to move, if the site they live on is in breach of planning regulations.

Not every site has residential permission and buying a holiday lodge as a permanent address can expose residents to risk of eviction.

Local authorities can prosecute park owners for breach of their site licence or planning consent. They can also serve enforcement orders on holiday park residents to remove their lodging from the site.

Furthermore, the homes may not be insured for floods or other natural disasters, nor will the residents automatically qualify for re-housing.

A Ribble Valley Borough Council

spokesman said: "We strongly advise residents to think carefully before parting with their greatest asset – their house – to live in a holiday park. And if they do so they are strongly advised to choose a licensed residential park, where they will have the full protection of the law.

"Although mobile homes are an attractive proposition for older residents looking to downsize, we cannot stress strongly enough how much they are risking if they choose to live at a site where residential use is not permitted."

The National Caravan Council has published a guide for park owners and managers called 'Misuse of Caravan Holiday Homes', which is available from thence.org.uk, and Age UK has produced a factsheet for prospective holiday park residents called 'Park Homes', which is available at ageuk.org.uk.

GET COSY THIS WINTER



THE provision of affordable housing is one of the biggest issues facing Ribble Valley Borough Council.

House prices in the borough are way above the national average and first-time buyers face being forced out of the communities

their families have lived in for generations, while properties for the young and elderly are in particular short supply.

But the council is at the forefront of several housing initiatives, from the provision of affordable properties and free boilers to

winter warmth and energy efficiency.

Read on to discover how the council and its partners are working hard to ensure the borough's housing stock meets the needs of local residents, particularly the young and elderly, for years to come.

The key to a HAPPI home

A FLAGSHIP Billington development featuring 19 two-bedroom 'HAPPI' homes for the over-55s is nearing completion.

The HAPPI homes, or Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation, are designed specifically for older dwellers. They are spacious and open, highly energy-efficient, secure, adaptable and 'care ready.' They also have high levels of natural light and green space and can be digitally connected.

The Elker Meadow scheme, which is being developed by St Vincent's Housing Association, also features easy-access parking and storage facilities, individual balconies, a communal lounge, a shared garden and allotments, and private courtyards.

Simon Hore, chairman of Ribble Valley Borough Council's health and housing committee, said: "The provision of affordable housing for older residents is one of the biggest challenges facing the council.

"We are delighted to have supported this flagship development, which is one of the best of its kind and will bring much-needed high-quality accommodation for older residents to the borough."

The HAPPI homes are due for completion in December and will be available for shared ownership or affordable rent.

Further details are available from Ribble Valley Borough Council's housing team on 01200 425111 or St Vincent's Housing Association on 0161 772 2165.



"We are delighted to have supported this flagship development"

Simon Hore, chairman of Ribble Valley Borough Council's health and housing committee



Helping families avoid threat of 'fuel poverty'

RIBBLE Valley residents are invited to 'get cosy' this winter thanks to a raft of energy saving measures aimed at helping them stay a step ahead of fuel poverty.

Ribble Valley Borough Council has been given a slice of £2.25m to install central heating systems in 'fuel poor' households.

The funds are available from the Cosy Homes in Lancashire partnership, which is offering grants, advice and support on a range of energy-saving measures, including boiler replacements and repairs, loft and wall insulation, and even fleece blankets.

And the funds aren't exclusively for low-income households, or those in receipt of benefits.

Health and housing committee chairman Simon Hore, pictured above with Ribble Valley Mayor Joyce Holgate, said: "The borough has a high level of fuel poverty and off-grid properties, and some residents struggle to keep their homes warm during the winter.

"The council has worked hard to address this problem over the years

and we are delighted that this new scheme has something to offer all our residents regardless of their circumstances, but particularly those on low incomes."

To qualify for a new central heating system, households must be classed as 'fuel poor', meaning the cost of heating their homes takes them below the poverty line.

Landlords and organisations working with clients who could benefit are also encouraged to apply.

Home improvement charity Homewise has also received £10,000 from the Government to fund home energy and slip and fall assessments for the over-60s in Ribble Valley.

Homewise will inspect homes to identify any trip, slip or fall hazards and where necessary carry out essential repairs, such as securing loose carpets and trailing wires, or easing stiff doors.

Further details are available from Ribble Valley Borough Council on 01200 425111, Cosy Homes in Lancashire on 0336061488 or Homewise on 01254 232249.

Affordable homes available in Whalley

A RAFT of new homes for affordable sale or rent will be up for grabs by Ribble Valley residents over the coming months.

As well as the HAPPI homes in Billington, 16 two and three-bedroom houses are available at Lawson Rise in Whalley – seven for affordable rent that have already been snapped up and nine for shared ownership.

The spacious garden properties are built to a unique specification by innovative developer Redrow.

Fourteen two and three-bedroom flats and



houses are also available at a 30 per cent discount at Monk's Cross in Mitton Road, Whalley, starting from £122,500.

And a further 15 discount sale and 12 shared ownership bungalows and two and three-bedroom houses will be made available at the development in due course.

Monk's Cross is developed by David Wilson, which specialises in building energy-efficient homes.

A further 24 two and three-bedroom properties will be also offered for discount sale or shared ownership at Abbeyfields in Hayhurst Road, Whalley, over the coming months.

Simon Hore, chairman of Ribble Valley Borough Council's health and housing committee, said: "The provision of affordable housing is one of the council's biggest challenges and we are working closely with developers and housing partners to address the problem.

"We are delighted to have supported these excellent schemes, which will make much-needed high-quality properties available to residents with a local connection for affordable rent, shared ownership or sale."

The properties are available for residents with a local connection, particularly from Whalley, and further information is available from Ribble Valley Borough Council's housing team on 01200 425111.

Landlord grants to ease cost of conversions

LANDLORDS in Ribble Valley are being offered cash for the creation of affordable rented accommodation.

The cash is up for grabs from Ribble Valley Borough Council in the form of grants for the conversion or renovation of affordable properties, particularly flats.

Up to 50 per cent of the cost of converting or renovating properties – £10,000 per flat or £15,000 per house – is available.

On completion, the property must meet the Government's decent homes standard and be let for a minimum of five years, during which the council will set an affordable rent and have nomination rights.

Simon Hore, chairman of Ribble Valley Borough Council's health and housing committee, said: "There is a chronic shortage of affordable housing in the borough, particularly for the young or single people, and our grant system is helping to alleviating the problem by encouraging prospective landlords to enter the rented accommodation sector.

"Grants are currently available and we are keen to hear from prospective landlords without delay."

Further information is available from Ribble Valley Borough Council on 01200 425111.



"The landlord renovation grant has helped me renovate two properties for affordable rent"

Landlord Chris Smith with Ribble Valley Borough Council's housing strategy manager, Rachael Stott

Historic building reopens as nine stunning apartments

ONE of Clitheroe's most imposing buildings that housed the design team on Sir Frank Whittle's jet engine has been turned into stunning affordable apartments for young working people.

Nine apartments will be up for grabs at Millthorne House in Henthorn Road from November thanks to a unique scheme backed by Ribble Valley Borough Council.

The apartments have been renovated to a high standard, are extremely energy-efficient and boast picture windows with stunning views of the surrounding countryside, Pendle Hill and Clitheroe Castle, as well as dedicated parking spaces.

They have been developed by Ribble Valley Homes specifically for young single people or couples in employment and with a local connection.

Rachael Stott, Ribble Valley Borough Council's housing strategy officer, said: "This is the first housing scheme in the borough specifically for young people for a long time.

"There is a chronic shortage of affordable accommodation for young people in Ribble Valley and we are delighted that Ribble Valley Homes has brought this stunning scheme to fruition."

Ribble Valley Homes managing director

Homes scheme designed for young people

Christine Grimshaw added: "We thought it might be up to 10 years before we could complete this scheme, but thanks to a small grant from the Homes and Communities Agency we have managed to undertake the work two years earlier than anticipated.

"The new apartments will provide quality accommodation close to the town centre for working singles and couples, who will also have the benefit of support from a local housing company.

"The work has been carried out to a superb standard by Clitheroe builder David Johnston and his team, giving the scheme the added value of having provided local employment."

Millthorne House has an illustrious past, having been home to the design team on Sir Frank Whittle's jet engine in the early-1930s.

The apartments are due for completion at the end of November and further details are available from Ribble Valley Homes on 0800 111 4448.

Walking scheme launches winter programme



AN award-winning walking scheme that helps Ribble Valley residents take strides in health and fitness has launched its 2016 winter programme.

Stepping Out, which is now part of the new Up and Active scheme featured on page 8, was set up in 2004 to promote walking as an effective and low-risk form of physical activity for those who are inactive.

Started with a handful of volunteers and two treks a week, it now offers a bustling programme of weekly walks of varying lengths and difficulty facilitated by an enthusiastic team of over 30

specially-trained volunteer walk leaders.

It attracts over 130 weekly participants, 80 per cent of who have been attending Stepping Out for over two years.

Stepping Out coordinator Barrie Williams (left) said: "Winter can be the perfect time to walk. The invigorating cold air can clear your mind and reduce stress, while getting outside during daylight hours also increases levels of the feel-good hormone serotonin.

"You don't have to be fit to walk and the elderly, as well as those recovering from illness, can enjoy it – and it's free.

"Stepping Out encourages people who

might not otherwise be active to enjoy the benefits of walking in a friendly, welcoming and non-competitive environment.

"It is now one of Lancashire's most successful health programmes and we are delighted that it is going from strength to strength.

"I would like to thank our team of dedicated and hard-working volunteers for helping to make the scheme such a success."

Further information and a Stepping Out programme are available from Barrie Williams on 01200 414484.

Council stalwarts officially honoured

TWO former Ribble Valley councillors have been recognised for their contribution to the borough by being conferred as Aldermen.

Michael Ranson and Alan Yearing, who have 32 years' civic service between them, were conferred as Honorary Aldermen at a special meeting of Ribble Valley Borough Council.

Michael served on the borough council from 2003 to 2015. He was leader from 2007 to 2012 and Ribble Valley mayor in 2014/15.

Ribble Valley Borough Council leader Stuart Hirst said: "Councils work at their best when their members draw on life and career experiences outside local government and bring abilities and talents that enhance the quality of decision-making.

"Michael Ranson is a fine example of this, who as leader of the council drew upon a wealth of legal and commercial experience at senior industrial level.

"The foundations of the council's robust finances were laid on his watch and have proved a secure legacy for the future, and I was delighted to propose him for this honour."

Alan Yearing served on Ribble Valley Borough Council from 1995 to 2015 and was the borough's mayor in 2003/04.

He was proposed by Allan Knox, who said: "Over the years, Alan has played a prominent role in the community and is well-known for his work with the Citizen's Advice Bureau and Pendle Club, which has played a prominent role in providing services for older people in Clitheroe."

The office of Alderman is an ancient title that draws its origins from the 'ealdorman' or elder men of Anglo Saxon England. It continues to the present day as a mark of respect for civic service.

The two men were presented with framed illuminated scrolls conferring the new honour.

Volunteer drivers needed for bus service

A COMMUNITY bus service supported by Ribble Valley Borough Council that prevents elderly and vulnerable residents from becoming "prisoners in their own homes" is looking for volunteer drivers.

The Little Green Bus, so-called because of its environmental credentials, provides door-to-door transport for elderly or vulnerable residents via fully-accessible minibuses and a volunteer car scheme that transports passengers to and from medical appointments.

It also has a programme of Friday trips aimed at reducing isolation and thereby contributing to improved health and wellbeing.

Ian Sayers, Ribble Valley Borough Council's community transport champion, said: "The Little Green Bus is a vital lifeline in a large rural community, where many elderly and vulnerable residents live in isolation.

"In fact, two passengers who developed a friendship on our weekly shopping trips went on holiday together, something they would not have contemplated on their own."

The Little Green Bus, started seven years ago, has five 16-seater minibuses

Giving 'isolated' residents a little taste of freedom

and 27 volunteer drivers offering affordable travel to over 900 residents and 50 community groups.

As well as being thoroughly appreciated, volunteer drivers receive ongoing training and support, insurance cover and expenses.

Little Green Bus chief executive Donna Atkinson added: "Our drivers are marvellous individuals, who volunteer their time to help us assist people, who without our services would be prisoners in their own homes.

"We can never have enough drivers and would love to hear from anyone interested in joining this wonderful team."

Further details on becoming a Little Green Bus volunteer driver or passenger are available from 01200 444484 or littlegreenbus.org.uk.



●ALL ABOARD: Donna and Ian with Ribble Valley Mayor Joyce Holgate

Apprenticeship programme helps young people kick-start career



YOU'RE hired! Ribble Valley Borough Council is backing a UK campaign aimed at recruiting more apprentices.

From next year, companies and organisations with more than 250 employees or an annual pay bill over £3 million will be required to invest in apprenticeships.

The Government wants to improve the quality of apprenticeships and create three million more by 2020.

The apprenticeship levy aims to address skills shortages and broaden young people's routes into decent careers.

Research shows that the better you train your employees the longer they stay and more positive effect they have on your organisation.

And Ribble Valley Borough Council is no stranger to apprenticeship success, with one former apprentice recently promoted to a senior post. Alan Coar (centre) was taken on

by Ribble Valley Borough Council as an apprentice electrician aged 16 – and 14 years and a degree in surveying later is now the authority's principal surveyor.

He said: "Being an apprentice has really worked for me. I undertook my degree by day release while gaining valuable work experience and have been able to earn while I learn.

"My career progression has surpassed what I might have achieved had I gone to university straight from school."

The council's regeneration projects officer, Melissa Thorpe (right), also worked her way up from being a legal apprentice and undertook a BA Business by day release.

And now IT apprentice Nick Haralambos (left) has been given a two-year extension to his apprenticeship after achieving an NVQ Level III in Computing, while former depot apprentice Mike Lancaster has just returned

to the authority as a fully-qualified HGV driver.

Ribble Valley Borough Council's head of human resources, Michelle Smith, said: "Apprenticeships are a tried and tested way to recruit new staff and attract enthusiastic talent with fresh ideas, as well as reduce staff turnover, by increasing employee satisfaction and loyalty.

"And kicking off your career with an apprenticeship is a great way to get a head start in the field you want to work in.

"They enable you to 'earn while you learn' and gain the skills and qualifications that future employers want."

Ribble Valley Borough Council has just appointed a three-year accounting apprentice and further apprenticeships are on the cards.

Further details are available at ribblevalley.gov.uk.

Working together to keep our borough one of the UK's safest

RIBBLE Valley is the safest place in Lancashire and one of the safest in the UK. And behind the scenes a great deal of hard work is going on to ensure this remains the case.

Ribble Valley Borough Council chairs the Ribble Valley Community Safety Partnership, which in 2005 was tasked with reducing crime by 13.5 per cent.

Since then, reported crime in Ribble

Valley has fallen by over 35 per cent and is down three per cent on last year, with 30 crimes for every 1,000 households recorded – significantly below the national average and the lowest in Lancashire.

Read on to find out how the partnership and its members are working hard to ensure Ribble Valley remains one of the safest places in the UK.

Security boost as CCTV switches on

CRIME prevention in Longridge has received a major boost thanks to the 24-hour switch-on of the town's CCTV system.

Technical advances mean the town's six CCTV cameras are now linked to the monitoring station in Clitheroe offering round-the-clock surveillance.

Robert Thompson, chairman of the Ribble Valley Community Safety Partnership, said: "Recent technical advances mean the Longridge CCTV system can now be linked to Clitheroe."

"CCTV is an essential tool in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, and this development is great news for Longridge."

Inspector Paul Goodall of Ribble Valley Police said: "This is fantastic news for Longridge and will

help us fight crime in the town, and respond more proactively.

"I have seen the CCTV system in operation and am looking forward to seeing some results."

It is a decade since CCTV cameras were installed by the Ribble Valley Community Safety Partnership at prominent points in Longridge, namely the Forrest Arms, Stonebridge and Durham Ox, with three more following at Market Place, the Towneley Arms and Shay Lane Industrial Estate.

Councillor Thompson added: "The cameras have been monitored from Longridge Police Station since installation, but following recent technical advances I am delighted that they can now be monitored round-the-clock from Clitheroe giving Longridge a valuable crime prevention boost."



●EYE, EYE: Terry Hill and Insp. Paul Goodall of Ribble Valley Police



'Safe glasses' served up to pubs

A SCHEME offering 'safe glasses' to Ribble Valley revellers has been extended after proving a huge success.

Over 3,000 polycarbonate glasses featuring the message 'Drink sensibly and enjoy your night' were handed out to local hostellers during street parties and festivals last summer.

The scheme has proved so popular that the Ribble Valley Community Safety Partnership has ordered a further 3,000.

Clitheroe is fast becoming a fashionable nightspot, attracting partygoers from across East Lancashire to its trendy wine bars and gastro-pubs. It also attracts food and music enthusiasts from across the region to

its flagship Ribble Valley Jazz Festival in May and Clitheroe Food Festival in August. Longridge and Whalley are also popular nightspots.

Terry Hill, deputy leader of Ribble Valley Borough Council, said: "Clitheroe and Longridge are fast becoming the place to be, attracting partygoers from across East Lancashire looking for a safe and enjoyable experience."

"The polycarbonate glasses are high quality and reusable, and are strengthening the perception of Ribble Valley as a safe place in which to enjoy a day or night out."

"The polycarbs have been so favourably received by hostellers and drinkers that we have ordered a further 3,000 to be used at the borough's popular festivals and street events."

'Mounties' saddle up to support our rural police

THE first volunteer 'Mounties' in the North West are out and about on the bridleways of Ribble Valley in a unique community safety scheme.

The Ribble Valley Community Safety Partnership and Lancashire Partnership Against Crime have set up the mounted volunteers scheme to support rural police officers in crime prevention.

The six volunteers, who ride regularly in Ribble Valley, have received special equipment, including hi-vis jackets identifying them as Lancashire Police mounted volunteers and hi-vis exercise sheets, leg bands and breastplates for their horses, as well as training from the British Horse Society in riding and road craft, observation and recording information, and knowledge of wildlife and rural crime. Police

community support officer Di Bioletti, who spearheaded the scheme, said: "Ribble Valley is a large rural area, which poses a challenge in terms of engaging with and being visible to the community."

"The mounted volunteers have an elevated position from which they can observe things that cannot be seen on foot or from a vehicle, such as over hedges and walls into fields and farm buildings, gardens and residential properties."

"Horse-riders are well placed to provide information on rural crime issues, including poaching, badger-

baiting, dog-fighting, fly-tipping, drug-use, anti-social behaviour, rustling and stone theft.

"In addition, they are part of the rural community, where most people know each other, so are best placed to provide a positive link between the police and residents."

Robert Thompson, chairman of the Ribble Valley Community Safety Partnership, said: "We are delighted to support this scheme, which will see local mounted volunteers provide a positive link between the police and residents."

"The volunteers will assist with crime prevention, while riding out on our bridleways, lanes and country roads, by looking out for anything suspicious and reporting it to the police control room."

"This is another fantastic example of community safety partners working together for the common good."

If successful, the scheme will be rolled out across the rest of Lancashire next year.



Why fitness is now just a click away

RIBBLE Valley residents are invited to get 'up and active' in a new interactive scheme that puts health and fitness in the palm of their hands.

Up and Active is accessible via smartphones, iPhones and the internet, and outlines a host of activities throughout East Lancashire – many of them free – via an activity search featuring public participation and community events, health walks, school activities, family workshops, afterschool clubs and community gardening.

Users can register on the Up and Active web site and track and monitor their progress, as well as download activity guides and information.

According to official statistics, more than 11,000 people in Lancashire were admitted to

hospital for weight-related conditions during 2014/15, the third highest rate in England.

Now Up and Active aims to tackle the county's obesity problem by making health and fitness accessible to all.

Tracy Balko, Ribble Valley Borough Council's health and fitness officer, said: "Regular physical activity can reduce the risk of many chronic conditions, including coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, obesity, mental health problems and musculoskeletal conditions.

"Up and Active can be accessed by people wherever they are and the council's health and fitness staff will also be on hand to help them achieve the recommended activity levels of 30 minutes five days a week."

Statistics also show that just 56 per cent of adults in Lancashire achieve the recommended two-and-a-half hours of moderate to vigorous physical activity each week.

Tracy Balko added: "Obesity combined with lack of exercise is one of the biggest preventable causes of early death alongside smoking. As well as shortening people's life expectancy, it can lead to many years of poor health and low quality of life.

"We are determined to help people enjoy better health by helping them get up and active."

Further details are available from upandactive.co.uk.



Connor's aiming high

WADDINGTON climber Connor Byrne is scaling the heights in more ways than one.

Not only is he tipped for Tokyo 2020, when the Olympics hosts climbing for the first time, but is on target for a 1st in Aerospace Engineering at the University of Sheffield.

Last September, Connor, who has been a recipient of Ribble Valley Borough Council's sports and arts excellence grants over the years, won the British Lead Climbing Championship for the fifth consecutive year in his age group, as well as the first British Universities and Colleges Lead Climbing Competition.

He represented the University of Sheffield at the European Youth Games in Croatia in July, where he finished 6th in lead climbing, 10th in bouldering and 13th in speed climbing, and later this year is China-

bound to represent Great Britain in the University World Games.

The announcement in August that sport climbing is a new event for the Tokyo Olympics is exciting news for Connor, who is tipped for selection for Team GB.

He said: "Olympic climbing will include a combination of the three climbing disciplines: lead, boulder and speed.

"My skills as a lead climber put me in good position, but the competition is serious, with many professional international climbers increasing their game.

"I have recently acquired a professional coach and there are some excellent training facilities in Sheffield, where many of my fellow Team GB climbers are students.

"I would like to thank Ribble Valley Borough Council for its support and interest over the years."

Cash for sports, arts and wellbeing

CASH is up for grabs for equipment and tuition by budding young sportspeople and performance artists, and community groups, in Ribble Valley.

Arts and culture groups in the borough are also invited to apply for funding for projects that boost community wellbeing.

Ribble Valley Borough Council has launched its 2017 sports and arts excellence grants scheme to help youngsters excel in sport, dance, drama and music.

The successful scheme has supported numerous young Ribble Valley athletes and performance artists at county and national level over the years, including Rio 2016 silver medallist Jon Schofield and London 2012 silver medallist Samantha Murray, as well as rising star climber Connor Byrne, who is tipped for Tokyo 2020. You can read about Connor above.

Cash is also available for capital purchases

by sports, community and village hall groups.

Robert Thompson, chairman of the council's community services committee, said: "The biggest issue for young people and their parents in pursuing their chosen activity is the cost of instruction, transport and equipment.

"We hope that by providing support towards these costs, young people will be able to reach their potential.

"Funds are also available for the hard-working sports and community groups, where many of these young people start their careers."

The grants will be available from April 2017 for sport, dance, drama and music (instrumental and voice), with priority given to those with a strong track record in their chosen discipline and working towards formal qualifications.

Arts and culture groups in Ribble Valley are also invited to apply for funding for projects that boost community wellbeing.

The cash is up for grabs as match funding for projects that improve arts activity in the borough, particularly for the disadvantaged and those with access difficulties.

Projects across the arts spectrum will be considered, including theatre, dance, music, comedy, film, photography, fine art, craft and creative writing.

Grants of up to £3,000 will be available for up to 50 per cent of the cost of the scheme, but not for maintenance or running costs, and are only available to not-for-profit organisations.

The deadline for applications is Friday, January 27, and application packs are available from the council's administration officer, Olwen Heap, on 01200 414408, or at ribblevalley.gov.uk.

Platform Gallery WHAT'S ON



● STAR EXHIBIT: Copper Cow, by Linda Hoyle, on show at Northern Star

Follow the star to town's festive extravaganza

SHOPPERS are invited to follow their star to Clitheroe this Christmas for the Platform Gallery's annual festive extravaganza.

This year's Christmas exhibition at the award-winning gallery is Northern Star, which runs from October 22 to January 7.

The exhibition will feature unique work from over 50 artists and makers from across the UK, including jewellery, ceramics and textiles.

Northern Star will also have a presence at the nearby Clitheroe Market, which will be hosting special festive craft stalls and events throughout December.

The new-look Platform Gallery and Clitheroe Visitor Information Centre is a one-stop shop for visitors and art and craft enthusiasts, with the latest information on events and accommodation, a shop selling maps, souvenirs and craftwork by local and national artists.

All purchases between £100 and £2,000 can be purchased through Own Art, an interest-free purchasing scheme.

The gallery is open Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm, Saturdays 10am to 4.30pm and Sundays in December 11am to 4pm. Further details are available from the gallery on 01200 425566. A full Northern Star programme will be available soon at ribblevalley.gov.uk.

Forthcoming exhibitions

**October 22 to January 7
Northern Star**

Popular Christmas exhibition featuring unique handmade gifts from the best craft makers from throughout the UK.

**January 21 to April 22
Craft Open**

Vibrant and eclectic annual open exhibition showcasing the best craft makers from across Lancashire and Yorkshire, including ceramics, glass, jewellery, textiles and wood. Vote for your favourite piece in the People's Choice Award.

Why not visit us on the web? www.ribblevalley.gov.uk