

ATTLE being driven to market through the centre of Clitheroe was a regular sight when Ribble Valley Borough Council opened for business in 1974

And one of the most far-reaching tasks facing the new council was the relocation of the town centre cattle market, or auction mart, and redevelopment of the vacant site.

An initial scheme attracted fierce opposition from town traders and a revised version featuring 39 market cabins and a building, 71-space car park and 20 flats, eventually went ahead in 1994, 15 years after the original scheme featuring underground parking and a community centre was put forward.

The scheme saw the auction mart and several haulage operations move to the Salthill Industrial Estate, which subsequently became a hub of commercial and light industrial activity. It is now the site of the council's direct works depot, as well as a flagship waste transfer station that opened in 2006 and has set the pace for waste management in Lancashire ever since.

The redevelopment facilitated the decommissioning of the former Clitheroe Gasworks in a groundbreaking £800,000 project led by the council and funded by the Department of the Environment.

The 14-courtyard gasholder was so toxic that it rotted the surrounding equipment and the topsoil so contaminated that a cutting-edge microbiological process was used to reclaim the site. The so-called superbugs broke down the contamination in 12 months, instead of 1,000 years, and the project became nationally acclaimed, as well as the first reclaimed gasholder site in the country to be used for multi-tenanted affordable housing at Black Lane Croft.

Ribble Valley Borough Council also spearheaded the redevelopment of the nearby semi-detached Clitheroe Rail Station, following an impressive campaign by local rail enthusiasts to have the Clitheroe to Manchester line reopened.

The station building was turned into a multi-award-winning travel hub and art gallery, called the Clitheroe Interchange and Platform Gallery, which was seen as a triumph for urban revitalisation and received an official opening by His Royal Highness Prince Charles in 2002.

The new Clitheroe Market went on to house the monitoring station for Ribble Valley's CCTV system, revamped in 2003 with a £300,000 grant from the Home Office. The scheme was the first of many projects led by the then Ribble Valley Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, now the Ribble Valley Community Safety Partnership, which is chaired by Ribble Valley Borough Council.

Many successful community safety initiatives later, Ribble Valley is the second safest place in the UK, according to Government statistics.

Ribble Valley Borough Council was also at the forefront of flood defence measures at the River Ribble in Low Moor. The worst floods in living memory hit the Riverside Estate at Low Moor and Taylor Street during two days of torrential rain in October 1980 that saw the Ribble rise by 12ft in some places.



40 years of vision and leadership

Following lobbying by the council, the North West Water Authority announced in 1982 that the Ribble would be the first river in Lancashire to have a tidal flood warning system. Ribble Valley Borough Council also replaced the sewerage system in several key areas of Clitheroe, including the installation of the largest thrust bored tunnel in the country at Woone Lane, which substantially reduced the risk of future flooding.

Clitheroe Castle has dominated the Ribble Valley skyline since its construction in the 12th Century by Robert de Lacy to protect the administrative centre of his vast estates and housed the office of the council's first chief executive, Michael Jackson.

The castle was the subject of a £3.5million refurbishment spearheaded by the council in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund and several public and private sector partners that saw a glass atrium linking the museum and North West Sound Archives on two levels, a cafe, exhibition space, interactive display facilities, education suite and several multimedia exhibitions depicting the history of Ribble Valley.

The scheme, officially opened by His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester in 2009, went on to win a raft of heritage and tourism awards.

And when it comes to the provision of sport and recreation facilities Ribble Valley Borough Council has also been a winner.

The council led a community campaign for a £200,000 synthetic sports pitch next to Longridge Sports Centre that was officially opened by international hockey player Val Robinson in 1995. In 2004, it funded a £120,000 refurbishment of Longridge Sports Centre, including new changing rooms, improvements to the reception, disabled access and a fitness room. And in 2008 Longridge Civic Hall opened a community hub featuring a children's centre and state-of-the-art gym thanks to a £195,000 grant from Ribble Valley Borough Council.

Ribble Valley Borough Council's successful sports and arts excellence grants scheme has supported numerous young athletes and performance artists at county and national level since being launched as the recreation grants scheme at the council's inception in 1974.

The scheme's many recipients include Olympic medalists Samantha Murray and Jon Schofield (pictured left), who received a triumphant homecoming following their success at London 2012.

Samantha, of West Bradford, who won the silver medal in the modern pentathlon, and Jon, who took bronze in the canoe sprint, alongside his kayaking partner, Liam Heath, thanked Ribble Valley Borough Council for playing a part in their success.

Thirty Ribble Valley Borough Council has achieved a great deal with the lowest council tax in Lancashire.

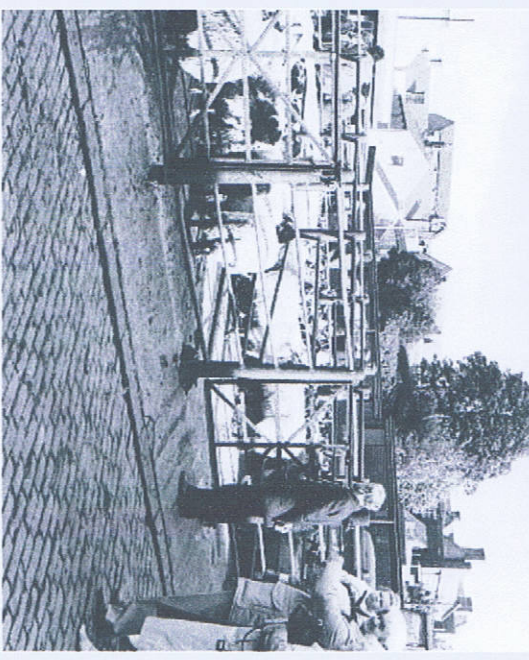
This year, it announced a council tax freeze without cuts in jobs or services for the fifth year running, despite a 12 per cent reduction in Government grants.

Council leader Stuart Hirst praised the dedication and hard work of council staff and councillors for delivering efficient and cost-effective services in difficult times.

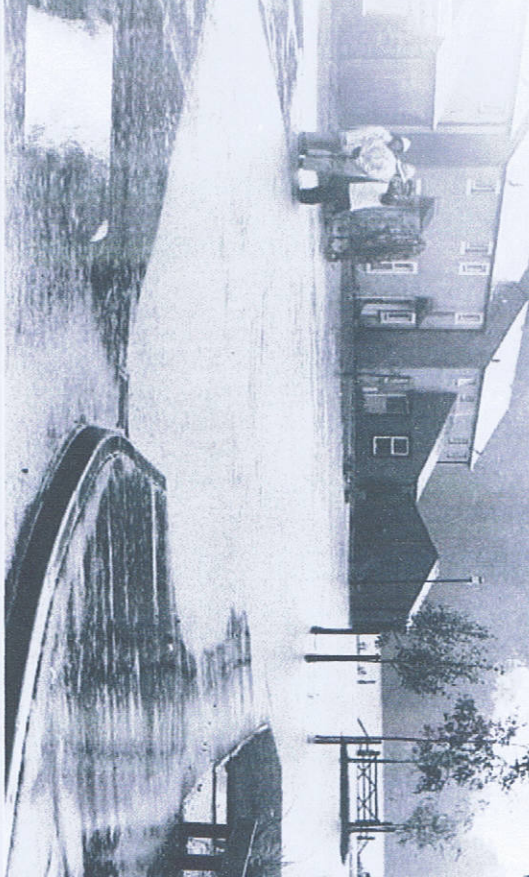
He said: "Like all other local authorities, Ribble Valley Borough Council has seen a significant reduction in financial support from the Government.

"There have been announcements from some neighbouring authorities about substantial redundancies, but our budget proposals for the coming year do not envisage any compulsory redundancies or reduction in services, while maintaining support for charitable and voluntary organisations.

"Our sound financial position is down to strong financial discipline, prudent management and a committed and dedicated workforce, and I would like to pay tribute to staff and councillors, past and present, for delivering efficient, cost-effective and first-class services over the last 40 years."



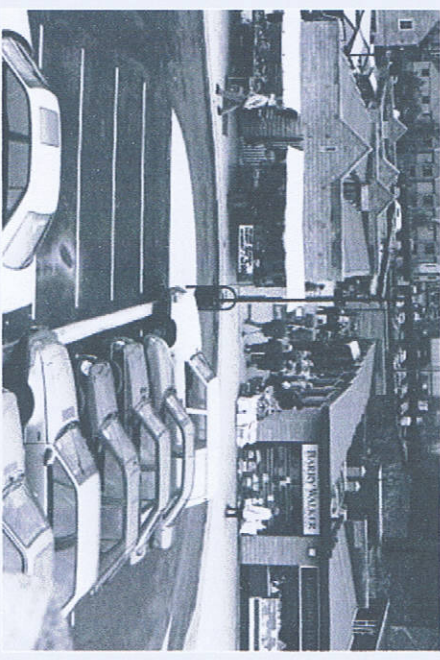
●The old Clitheroe Cattle Market



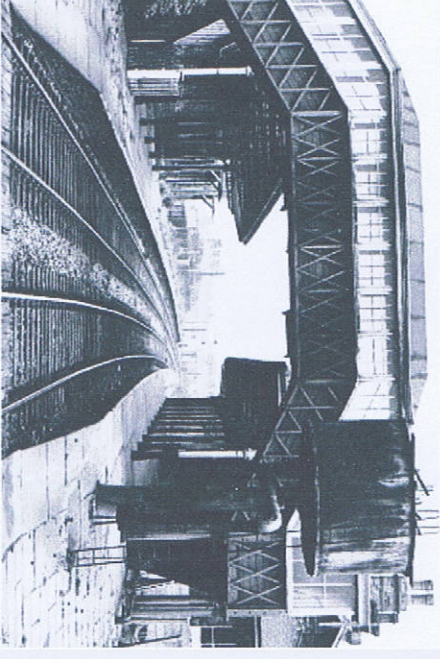
●Flooding at Riverside Estate, Low Moor



●The Clitheroe Gasworks demolition



●The new Clitheroe Market



●The semi-detached Clitheroe Rail Station



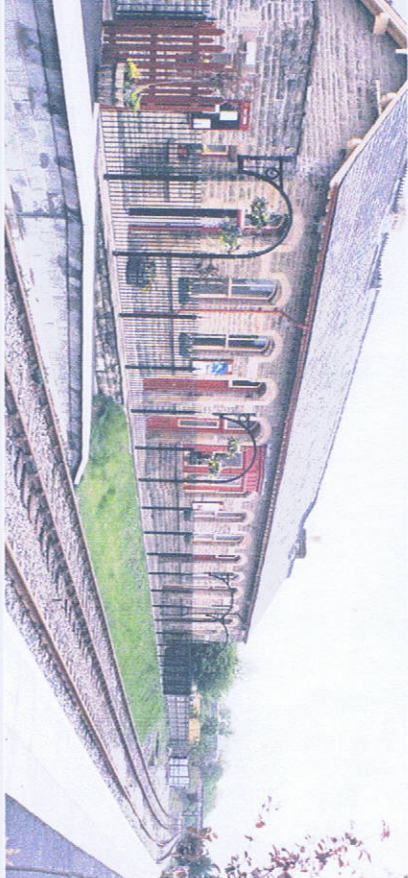
●A Royal opening for the £3.5million Clitheroe Castle Museum



●The council's Salthill Depot and flagship waste transfer station



●Much-needed affordable housing at Black Lane Croft



●The new Clitheroe Interchange and Platform Gallery