

# SIMONSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

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<b>Date:</b>	08 January 2026		
<b>Place:</b>	St. Peters School Church Hall, Simonstone		
<b>Present:</b>	Councillors: D. Peat (Chair), A. Duckworth, C. Pollard, M. Vaughton, J. Hampson, R. McKelvey, S. Finn.		
<b>In attendance:</b>	Clerk to the Council (Dr A Haines), 1 member of the public		
<b>Meeting started:</b>	19:00	<b>Meeting closed:</b>	20:25

260801/

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Accepted: Cllr Malcolm Peplow.

Absent: Cllr Greera Stevenson.

**2. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2025.**

Cllr Hampson requested the following amendments:

12.3: "Cllr Hampson has agreed to the cost of battery purchases...." changed to "Cllr Hampson proposed battery purchases to the cost of...."

13: "Cllr Hampson claimed that the land is not unregistered" changed to "Cllr Hampson informed members that the land is held under covenant to the school".

19: "Cllr Hampson attended the LALC conference" changed to "Cllr Hampson attended the LCC and LALC conference".

**3. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS.**

Cllr Pollard declared an interest in item 6 (River Calder Project) due to his involvement with the Martholme Greenway Group, Cllr Hampson declared a perceived interest in item 6 as a student/student teacher with East Lancashire Learning Group.

**4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

1 member of the public in attendance: John Barker, representative of the River Calder Project.

**5. FINANCE REPORT.**

The Clerk submitted a report seeking approval for the accounts to date, the Reconciliation of Receipts and Payments and the Schedule of Payments (Appendix I). Cllr Hampson queried Little Green Bus payment, to be discussed further under agenda item.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

- Approve the accounts to date.
- Approve the Reconciliation of Receipts and Payments, Schedule of Payments for Nov-Dec 2025, and receipts for period 1<sup>st</sup> April-31<sup>st</sup> - Dec 2025.

**6. MOTION TO VOTE IN SUPPORT OF THE RIVER CALDER PROJECT CLEAN-UP PROPOSAL**

The clerk submitted a report for members to read in order to vote on the River Calder project clean-up proposal submitted to Fort Vale by the East Lancashire Learning Group, who are seeking approval / support from the parish council for this project.

Cllr Hampson absented herself from the discussion. John Barker spoke briefly about the project, highlighting the amount of rubbish washed down the Calder from the Padiham side, with rubbish distributed all over land and into Ribble Valley when the river floods. Sited on Fort Vale land, the project aims to involve students, local industries and environmental groups to build a machine that will sit in the river and remove rubbish, sifting through it in order to ascertain where it has come from. Looking for approval in principle from Simonstone Parish Council, with no financial commitment.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

All voted in favour of providing approval/support in principle.

## **7. CCTV INSTALLATION ON SCHOOL LANE**

The Clerk submitted a report informing members of the recent incidents on school Lane and correspondence with agencies regarding CCTV installation as a precursor to a CCTV installation project. A resident on Whalley Road has reported the theft and vandalism of stone balls atop his garden gate. PCSO Katie Ferguson has also advised that the Simonstone Lane/Whalley Road/School Lane is a nexus for criminal access to our village. Katie raised the topic of a CCTV Camera in the Parish Garden facing along Whalley Road but covering the top of Simonstone Lane and entrance to School Lane.

Cllr Peat has contacted Nicola Hopkins regarding funding for installing CCTV in villages. Nicola has replied saying £8000 has been allocated for CCTV in villages in SPF fund, with a grant of up to £1000 available towards village CCTV.

A recent installation at Read CC /RPC Car Park cost £1950 gross. (The RVBC officer has been advised that we may be interested in this support subject to SPC decision in January 2025.)

The aim of CCTV would be to act as a deterrent to crime and to support the Police in enquiries.

Practical considerations: Have power in garden for Christmas tree. Requires a 3m high pole, and data to be sent somewhere to be monitored as required. Data could be sent to clerks PC. Officer at RVBC Sergeant Kevin Day has expertise in positioning CCTV, Cllr Hampson will share details with clerk. Cllr Duckworth suggests speaking to local residents about opinions on CCTV.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

- a. Express interest for funding formally with Ribble Valley Borough Council (council voted unanimously).
- b. Speak to Sgt Kevin Day/specialist CCTV officer for advice on CCTV positioning.
- c. Send a note to residents from Toll Bar cottage, on school lane no 1-7, 2-8 on Whalley Road.

## **8. MEMBER ABSENCE**

The clerk submitted a report informing members of member absence protocol to support decision on current absences.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

- a. Pass a resolution that Cllr Stevenson (formally Norse) has forfeited membership from parish council by not attending a parish council meeting for 8 months without sending apologies and is effectively no longer a member.
- b. Write to Cllr Stevenson to inform her of the decision.
- c. Consult with Head of Democratic Services from RVBC on timetable for recruiting a new councillor.

## **9. OVERGROWN HEDGES**

The clerk submitted a report outlining correspondence/contact with residents so far as a means to discuss next steps in current cases and future strategies for addressing this issue, including using clerk's address on letters sent out.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

- a. Pass details of 2 residents that haven't complied with SPC requests to trim their hedges on to LCC.

- b. Add to annual calendar future dates to put out a general overgrown hedge notice (website, Facebook, noticeboards), with 28 days' notice to comply, taking into consideration birds nesting/best time to trim hedges.

#### **10. MAILBOX UPGRADE**

The clerk has upgraded her mailbox capacity from 2 GB to 50 GB at an additional cost of £5.99 as she was no longer able to send and receive emails.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL: all agreed in exceptional circumstances had to be done.

#### **11. ASSERTION 10 (25/26 AGAR)**

The clerk submitted a report informing members of the requirements of Assertion 10 in the 25/26 AGAR.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

- a. Appoint Cllr Hampson as Data Protection Officer.
- b. Find a template Data Protection Policy to amend for SPC for next meeting.
- c. Amend template IT policy provided in report for SPC.
- d. Book GDPR course for Cllr Hampson and clerk to attend.

#### **12. AUTHORISATION OF LITTLE GREEN BUS GRANT APPLICATION FOR £150**

The clerk submitted a report informing members that the 24/25 agreed donation to The Little Green Bus for £150 has now been paid, and requesting members consider another donation for 25/26

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

Ask The Little Green Bus to complete and submit an application form for a donation.

#### **13. AUTHORISATION OF LENGTHSMAN COSTS/WORK HOURS FOR FENCE AROUND BENCH**

The clerk submitted a report outlining the Lengthsman proposed costs and requesting approval for fence installation by Lengthsman around bench. The Lengthsman has given a quote for £80 for the materials with an additional 8 hours' labour due to the requirement to carry the materials from the road to the site (£232 for labour plus £80 materials). There may be potential to drive to site depending on landowner permission.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

Defer decision until March meeting when quote comes through with amended labour costs.

#### **14. DEFIBRILLATOR DECISION**

The clerk submitted a report informing members of the current status of defibrillator funding and request approval to purchase a new defibrillator, fully automatic with armoured cabinet, £1608 inc .VAT, (£1340 exc. VAT), delivered, needs screwing to wall. Current box has electricity, just needs wiring in.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

Proceed with purchase, pay for an electrician to install.

#### **15. SIMONSTONE PARENT FEES FOR HIGH SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION**

Verbal report by Cllr Hampson on the higher costs of pupils from Simonstone attending Ribble Valley Schools compared to Sabden and compared to the cost of attending schools in Accrington. Cllr Hampson recommends looking to get more anecdotal evidence of Simonstone residents affected on the matter, could put request on Facebook. Cheaper to go to Accrington than Clitheroe. Cllr

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

- a. Cllr Hampson/Cllr Vaughton to draft a call for information on Simonstone pupil bus travel costs to put on Facebook, requesting people make their response via email to the clerk.

#### **16. LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INITIATIVE PLAN**

Cllr Pollard submitted report informing members of funding for local cycling and walking initiatives. Cllr noticed on social media that LCC allocating £20 million pounds to this initiative, which could possibly be used to complete the cycle route from Padiham to Greater Harwood, connecting Pennine cycleways. Cllr Pollard asked if SPC would support this scheme in principle. Cllr McKelvey highlighted that SPC have already supported the cycleway in the past and proposed communicating with LCC on how much funding will come our way to further the aims of getting cycleway going.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

Draft a letter to LCC for consideration at next meeting.

#### **17. PROGRESS UPDATE ON SCHOOL FIELD FOOTPATH**

The clerk submitted report informing members of the latest updates on the school field footpath, including recommendations from LCC outlining two options going forward (1. construct a path with the landowner's permission and seek a dedication agreement by LCC which would make it publicly maintainable. This would require funding to be identified in the first instance as it is unlikely that LCC would consider the proposal until that was in place/2. apply for a definitive map modification order to record public footpath rights if there is evidence that they already exist, then seek to upgrade the surface with landowners' agreement and LCC agreeing to adopt it) and a recent response from landowners with concerns regarding the PROW upgrade.

Cllr Pear proposed to write to LCC passing on new correspondence and stating that the footpath will providing better access for school children, church goers and the general public and therefore can LCC act on option 2 (apply for a DMMO) on the proviso that there is no cost to SPC. Cllr McKelvey seconded, all members voted in favour except for Cllr Duckworth.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

Write to LCC informing them of decision above.

#### **18. SPID UPDATE**

The clerk informed members that there have been issues reported with the current SPID machine at the junction of School and Trapp Lane not working. Cllr Pollard asked Lengthsman to resolve.

#### **19. LANCASHIRE RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (ROWIP)**

The clerk requested that members compile comments on circulated survey.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

Appoint Cllr Duckworth to view survey and respond on behalf of council.

#### **20. PLANNING REPORT.**

The clerk submitted a report on the relevant planning applications that had been submitted since the last Council meeting. Members were reminded that weekly planning applications and decided lists of planning applications are available to view on the RVBC website by using the link below:

[https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/weekly\\_lists](https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/weekly_lists)

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

Note the report and respond to planning department with comments.

#### **21. CRIME FIGURES.**

The Clerk submitted a report updating members on the latest crime statistics up to December 2025 as provided by PCSO Katie Ferguson.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

Note the report.

#### **22. PARISH PLAN QUESTIONNAIRE**

Cllr Peat thanked Cllr Duckworth for his efforts in compiling this report. Cllr Duckworth gave an overview, highlighting the 7 sections of the report: 6 sections are background data/facts/figure, the important part is section 7. There are a number of things to agree and any key issues that the council want to be included. A member of Read council has asked for copy of our questionnaire. Cllr Duckworth will lead the meeting in February. Cllr Peat proposed holding at Higher Trapp.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

Contact Higher Trapp to book a private meeting for 8 people with tea and coffee on 5<sup>th</sup> February from 7-9pm. If fully booked can hold meeting at St Peters Church.

## **23. CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA.**

- a. Clerk presented a letter from Angela Whitwell regarding the continuation of the Lengthsman Scheme. No money coming in from LCC: do SPC want to carry on with the current administration of scheme or find our own Lengthsman. Cllr Pollard has approached another contractor who would be willing to quote, in addition to current Lengthsman. Cllr Hampson pointed out that the current lengthsman scheme has issues currently with keeping track of costings and work that has been done; it would be a welcome opportunity to do this for ourselves.
- b. Cllr Vaughton highlighted problems with noticeboard locking mechanism, Cllr McKelvey offered to take a look at this.
- c. Cllr Peat thanked Cllr Vaughton for organising the Christmas lights and Senior Citizen's lunch and thanked the councillors that attended the Remembrance Service.
- d. Message from Lamplight - they have been in touch about a lamp of peace, won't cost anything as SPC still have a lantern.
- e. Cllr Hampson reported dangerous flags over stream in the field between tennis court and Whins Lane by tennis courts on the LCC lovecleanstreets app. There is now a footpath walkway bridging this.
- f. Some attendees of the Xmas lunch had made observations about the event which Cllr Vaughton will feed back to the Higher Trapp.
- g. Letter from British legion about all things coming up in next year.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

- a. Come out of Lengthsman scheme, clerk to let Angela know and give our thanks for her involvement. Cllr Pollard will attend final meeting.
- b. Put Lamplight on agenda for March.
- c. Thank PROW team for footpath improvement whilst contacting on item 17. Mention bridge at River Calder that also needs work.
- d. Feedback to Higher Trapp.
- e. Write to Ged Mirfin asking about when grit will be made available.

## **24. BOROUGH COUNCILLOR REPORT**

Cllr Peplow submitted his report in his absence for the consideration of the Parish Council (attached, appendix II).

## **25. FUTURE MEETINGS 2026: 5 FEBRUARY 2026 (CLOSED MEETING), 5 MARCH 2026, 7 MAY (ANNUAL MEETING/ANNUAL PARISH MEETING) 2026.**

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL: Agree that the next meeting would take place on 5 February 2026 (closed meeting), 5 March 2026 and 7 May 2026.

Dr Anna Haines

***Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Simonstone Parish Council.***

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Appendix I: Finance Report November-December 2025.

November & December 2025 Account reporting		
<b>Payments</b>		
Date	Item	Amount
01/11/25	Easy websites	£ 55.44
04/11/25	Clerk tax and NI from p30	£ 91.52
06/11/25	BP to Read PC for Raffle prize contribution	£ 18.12
12/11/25	clerk tax and NI for November 2025	£ 106.46
12/11/25	clerk salary - Anna Haines November	£ 386.15
12/11/25	Ringbinders	£ 2.78
12/11/25	Festive Lights	£ 127.98
17/11/25	Letter box funds reimbursed to Alan Duckworth	£ 30.00
17/11/25	Use IT computers	£ 4.20
17/11/25	Use IT computers	£ 19.56
20/11/25	Deposit for Higher Trapp Xmas meal	£ 398.50
20/11/25	DM Payroll Services	£ 72.00
21/11/25	Simonstone CE School donation	£ 150.00
30/11/25	Service charge	£ 6.00
01/12/25	Easy websites	£ 55.44
04/12/25	BP to Maureen Vaughton for batteries for xmas lights	£ 10.00
04/12/25	BP to Maureen Vaughton for crib locks	£ 5.98
11/12/25	Use ITComputers	£ 4.20
11/12/25	Use IT computers	£ 19.56
16/12/25	Clerk salary - Anna Haines December	£ 436.75
16/12/25	clerk tax and NI for December 2025	£ 55.86
16/12/25	Clerk printing expenses Oct - Dec 2025	£ 13.58
31/12/25	Service charge	£ 6.00
Total		£ 2,076.08
<b>Receipts</b>		
Date	Item	Amount
Total		£ -

Bank accounts		
	Unity Current:	£ 1,009.41
	Unity Savings:	£ 13,510.93
	Total	£ 14,520.34
	Balance brought forward	£ 16,596.42
	Difference from previous month	-£ 2,076.08
<b>Bank reconciliation</b>		
Receipts - Payments		-£ 2,076.08
Difference from previous month		-£ 2,076.08
Do these amounts match?		YES

			Actual Income												
		Stream	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	Total
RVBC Precept		Precept	9,000.00												9,000.00
HMRC VAT Return		VAT Repay	1,004.66												1,004.66
RVBC Grants		Grants	500.00	150.00							250.00				900.00
Concurrent Funding		Grants						396.00							396.00
Other Grants		Grants							469.45						469.45
Bank interest		Bank							10.93						10.93
Tax rebate/refund		Rebates, refunds and switches													0.00
Account switch		Rebates, refunds and switches							9,208.16						9,208.16
Totals:			10,504.66	150.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	396.00	9,688.54	0.00	250.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	20,989.20

			Actual Expenditure														
		Stream	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	Total	Budget	Rem.
Clerk Salary		Admin. Exp.	342.20	343.20	343.20		909.67	352.30	352.50	386.15	436.75	394.55	394.55	394.55	4,649.62	4,657.87	8.25
HMRC Income Tax		Admin. Exp.			171.60	85.80			0.00	197.98	55.86	0.00	0.00	0.00	511.24	257.4	-253.84
Clerk Expenses		Admin. Exp.						13.62	24.69	2.78	13.58	12.00	12.00	12.00	90.67	87	-3.67
Payroll services		Admin. Exp.						72.00	0.00	72.00	0.00	72.00	0.00	0.00	216.00	144	-72.00
Use-It		Admin. Exp.	44.12		23.76		71.28	43.32	4.20	23.76	23.76	31.00	31.00	31.00	327.20	368.48	41.28
Easy Web/web site		Admin. Exp.	55.44	55.44	55.44	55.44	55.44	55.44	55.44	55.44	55.44	55.44	55.44	55.44	665.28	665.28	0.00
Training		Admin. Exp.	249.62						144.00		0.00	0	0.00	0.00	393.62	249.62	-144.00
Audit		Admin. Exp.			125.00				0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	125.00	125	0.00
License fees/subscriptions		Admin. Exp.							0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	50	50.00
Insurance		Admin. Exp.		234.61					0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	234.61	234.61	0.00
Bank charges		Admin. Exp.	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	12.00	12.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	84.00	72	-12.00
Room Hire		Admin. Exp.	200.00				45.00		0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	245.00	250	5.00
Other admin		Admin. Exp.							248.00						248.00	144	-104.00
RVBC Bins		Amenity Exp.	540.79						0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	540.79	0	-540.79
Lengthsman/Other Maint		Amenity Exp.			2,197.50				0.00		0.00	300.00	100.00	100.00	2,697.50	1225	-1,472.50
Defrib./Bus Shelter		Amenity Exp.	150.00						0.00		0.00	1,200.00	0.00	0.00	1,350.00	150.00	-1,200.00
Other amenity		Amenity Exp.			50.00		21.90		702.00		0.00	150.00	50.00	50.00	1,023.90	500.00	-523.90
Grants/contributions		Sundry Exp.			60.00		375.00		0.00	150.00	0.00	100			685.00	500	-185.00
Remembrance/Other		Sundry Exp.						100.00	27.50	30.00	0.00				157.50	500	342.50
Christmas		Sundry Exp.					50.00	6.53	0.00	544.60	15.98				617.11	500	-117.11
Totals:			1,588.17	639.25	3,032.50	147.24	1,534.29	655.21	1,570.33	1,468.71	607.37	2,320.99	648.99	648.99	14,862.04	10,680.26	-4,181.78



## **BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT TO SIMONSTONE PARISH COUNCIL ON 8 JANUARY 2026.**

Happy New Year everyone. I would like to offer my apology to Simonstone Parish Council as I have a Planning Committee meeting at 6.30pm on 8 January.

Moving to local government reorganisation, the competing proposals for change were submitted to the Secretary of State on 28 November and a government-run public consultation will then start very shortly this winter/spring in 2026. Ribble Valley Borough Council confirmed its preferred option as merger with Preston and Lancaster Councils if change must go ahead and was part of that bid to the Secretary of State. I urge all residents to keep a look out for the Government consultation as this will be the only chance to express our views before the Government decides which option to select. Up to date information on local government reorganisation can be found on Ribble Valley Borough Council's website.

I received a report from a resident just before Christmas of a recurrence of problems with Transdev's M2 service where school pupils have either failed to be collected as the single decker has too little capacity or the bus has arrived up to 45 minutes late. This unreliability is completely unacceptable for parents and pupils and Gaye and I are following this up again. We need assurances that buses will have enough capacity and that reliability will improve.

I have received a report of some engineering groundworks near the Simonstone Time Business Park which I have asked planning enforcement officers to investigate to check whether planning consent was required.

Martholme Greenway Group has been completing its application for funding from the Ribble Valley Jubilee Fund to upgrade the Martholme Greenway path between Simonstone Lane and Gooseleach Wood. I will be attending the Ribble Valley SPF and Jubilee Fund Working Group on

Friday 9 January and will make another case for the bid to be approved if all information requested by the Council has been submitted by the Group.

I will also look out for the Parish Council's bid for matched grant funding for the upgrade of the footpath between Harewood Avenue and School Lane and speak strongly in support of it if the project appears to be deliverable within the available timeframe.

Our next Councillor Drop-in Session will be held at St. Peter's School Church Hall, School Lane Simonstone from 10-11am on Saturday 24 January. Following the agreement of the Read & Simonstone Village Hall Trustees, Gaye and I will be holding our future drop-in sessions in Read in the Hub Room of Read & Simonstone Village Hall on the last Wednesday of each alternate month so that it is easy for anyone attending the Café to cross the corridor and visit us without making a special visit to the Village Hall on a Saturday. We think this is very positive and we are grateful that the Trustees have approved this change. It brings us to an event that a lot of residents attend in Read while maintaining Saturday sessions in Simonstone for all residents of both villages who are at work on weekdays. I will be updating the signs on the notice boards of both venues to confirm the dates shortly.

Councillor Malcolm Peplow

7 January 2026

