

SIMONSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

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Date:	07 May 2026		
Place:	St. Peters School Church Hall, Simonstone		
Present:	Councillors: D. Peat (Chair), A. Duckworth, C. Pollard, M. Vaughton, J. Hampson, R. McKelvey, S. Finn.		
In attendance:	Clerk to the Council (Dr A Haines), 10 members of the public		
Meeting started:	19:15	Meeting closed:	19:39

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING (ELECTORAL MEETING) 260705/

1. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS.

- Welcome by the Chair of Simonstone Parish Council.
- Brief Explanation of the purpose of the Annual Meeting of Electors. Cllr Peat explained that the purpose of this meeting is to close off the previous year and open the business of the new year. This is normally quite a short meeting. Meetings are recorded for factual record.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES.

Cllr Peplow.

3. TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE 22 MAY 2025 MEETING.

Minutes have been approved through parish council meeting in June 2025.

4. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHAIR.

Report by the Chair reviewing the Council's activities, achievements, and key projects during the 2025/2026. Full report attached (appendix I). Overview:

- Lost previous clerk in August and appointed A Haines as new clerk.
- Cllr Stevenson left in early 2026.
- Business for 25/26: ongoing road safety, produced a parish plan questionnaire and report, held a remembrance day event, dealt with overhanging hedges, installed a commemorative bench by the River Calder, work on school footpath, installed a CCTV camera on Whalley road located on advice of police, funded a new defibrillator, held usual pensioner's Christmas lunch, put up Christmas lights, contributed to schools elf day, produced quarterly newsletters.
- Looking forwards into 26/27: we will be looking to plant trees on the field behind school, supporting work cleaning up River Calder and banks, holding lamp light event and big mission weekend event, continuing with work on the parish plan. This is basic hard, unpaid volunteer work. We have relatively small funds but do our best with them.
- Future: Ribble Valley expects to be swallowed into a larger council – current options are to merge with Preston and Lancaster, or with Blackburn. Ribble Valley has been very good with parishes and has given us a lot of help.
- Cllr Peat formally thanked the clerk and fellow councillors for hard work.

5. OVERVIEW OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS.

Reported on in Annual meeting of the Parish Council 2026.

6. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM.

Mark Murphy, Save Hammond Ground Community Group (full speech provided in Appendix II). Overview:

- We are asking to debate the so-called public consultation put in by developers. Many applications have been rejected over the years; this time the current application is for 77 houses.
- Earlier this year we submitted a freedom of information request with RVBC and were told planners were strongly advised not to put in an application. They were also advised to contact the local community for engagement – so far this has fallen short of broad consultation.
- We are planning to put together a comprehensive objection with support.
- We attended Read PC last night – Cllr Peplow has been very helpful and has looked to get further clarification on planning matters.
- Questions for parish councils – how will open land be managed? What happens with litter and dog fouling, anti-social behaviour? We want assurance on what public access will be like.
- We want to ask SPC for three things: (i) to formally highlight the inadequacies of the consultation, (ii) scrutinise long term viability of open parkland and potential repercussions plan, and (iii) engage with our group activities.
- We all recognise need for new housing but needs to be in right place and right form of housing.

Cllr Peat - thanked Mark. We have to be very careful, can't be seen to interfere in planning decisions until we have seen all information. Asks Cllrs to reflect on what Mark has said.

Cllr Duckworth – should be looking at Hammond Ground and the whole area – impact on facilities, such as schools. This should be looked at as a team between Read and Simonstone Parishes. We don't have a GP, we don't know what the impact will be on highways.

Cllr Hampson – previous larger developments have introduced holistic communities, including GPs, schools for 700 houses, etc, rather than what some areas have added, such as no facilities but creep up at 70 homes at time with no infrastructure added.

Cllr Peat highlighted Section 106 agreements – developer money used for highways, health, education and the like.

Haven't received application yet so don't know all of the details. Looking at making people buying houses manage the land surrounding the development.

Cllr McKelvey – Hammond ground is the land adjacent to George Lane, this used to be called Read Park. Land for sale further past Read Hall is agricultural land and not Hammond Ground. Hammond Ground includes woodland as well (40-acre plot owned by trustees).

Cllr Finn – Whalley Road is increasingly being used by heavy tractors; there have been 3 accidents at the corner of George Lane in the past 3 months. Transportation is a big issue here.

Cllr Hampson – when the Secretary of State makes a decision there is a legal timeframe to wait before application can be made again (this is possibly 20-25 years, but Cllr Hampson will check).

7. KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2026/2027

Already mentioned in item 4 – parish plan, fitting defibrillator, parish functions, cleaning River Calder, lamplight event, Big Mission Weekend, Addressing school bus fares, school footpath work. We are responsive to residents.

8. CLOSING REMARKS.

None.

Dr Anna Haines

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Simonstone Parish Council.

DRAFT

7th May 2025

Report of the Chairman

- 1)The Parish Council met in Public on 6 occasions plus working groups relating to the Parish Plan.
- 2)During the year Mr Mike Hill, the Clerk resigned in August and Dr Anna Haines was appointed following public advertisement in August. Cllr Greera Stevenson left the Council in early 2025.
I thank both for their service.
- 3)During the year we continued to address items continuing from previous years and also dealt with new items.
- 4)Amongst the continuing items discussed were
 - a) formal business matters such as a review of Standing Orders and Policies,
 - b) issues relating to the formalisation and improvement of the Path across the School Field,
 - c)Road Safety, Speeding and SPIDS
 - d)the development of a Parish Plan following a Questionnaire.
 - e) Remembrance Day
 - f) Overhanging hedges on pavements
- 5)We also began to address other matters
 - a) VE Day and provision of a Commemorative Bench by the River Calder
 - b) new Policies regarding Council Assets and their Disposal, IT and Data Protection and in draft a CCTV Policy
 - c)we have funded a new Defibrillator for the outside wall of St Peters Church
 - d)we have funded with RVBC a CCTV unit located on Police Advice in the Parish Garden
 - e) We part funded a Senior Citizens Christmas Party, additional Christmas Lights and a grant to Elf Day at the village School. (RVBC contributed to the lights and lunch)
 - f) produced an Autumn Newsletter for villagers as well as using social media to keep residents aware of issues.
- 6)There are a number of issues commenced in the year which are still a work in progress including.
 - a) a Treescapes initiative to plant appropriate trees and shrubs behind the Church on the School Field
 - b) publicising different experiences regarding High School Bus Fares for village students
 - c)supporting the cleaning up of the River Calder and its banks in the village.
 - d)supporting the Lamplight Initiative
 - e) supporting the Diocesan Big Mission Weekend through permitting a Peace Pole in the Parish Garden.
 - f) formally receiving and approving the Parish Plan 2026.
- 7)This is a significant and noteworthy record of the work of the Parish Councillors and Clerk both individually, through small group work and as a Parish Council. I should like to formally thank all Councillors and the Clerk for giving their time freely.
- 8)For the future, there is some uncertainty as it is likely that Ribble Valley Borough Council is anticipated to be swallowed within a much larger Unitary Council. Ribble Valley Council has been a strong supporter of its Parishes. Parish elections are due in May 2027, but they may change in the Local Government Reorganisation Maelstrom when other elections may also shift. However, we shall not know the future shape of local government until Summer of 2026. In the meantime.
Simonstone Parish Council has a clear function and important local jobs to undertake.
- 9)Thank you all for your support and endeavours.
David Peat OBE
Chairman Simonstone Parish Council 24/3/26 v1

Good evening, councillors and fellow residents. I'm Mark Murphy and I'm speaking as Chair of Save Hammond Ground community group.

Let me be clear from the outset: we are not here to debate a specific planning application. None has been submitted, yet. We are here to address the so-called "public consultation" currently being carried out by the developers for an initial 77 houses and 30 acres of land open to the public on Hammond Ground. Many planning applications have been rejected over the years on this historic parkland which started with early ambitions for 700 houses which we still believe is the magnitude of the developers' aspirations.

Earlier this year, we submitted a Freedom of Information request to Ribble Valley Council. The response confirmed that when the developer first approached officers last summer, they were strongly advised against pursuing an application for 120 dwellings. They were also told that any future application must include extensive supporting reports, including meaningful community engagement.

What we are seeing now falls well short of that. We estimate only around 40 residents in Read appear to have been contacted. Meanwhile, some councillors have been approached directly. That is not broad or transparent engagement.

There has been no attempt to engage with us or the community effectively. Our group has over 430 followers and we are already planning a comprehensive objection when we see the planning application which is expected any day, by working with planning, landscape and heritage specialist. I attended Read Parish Council last night and Cllr Peplow agreed to get further clarification from the Planning Team as to what constitutes 'community engagement'

Our concern is that this consultation is limited in reach, and light on detail. It presents an apparently benign vision but avoids the harder questions. Regardless of individual views on any future application, we should be asking questions.

For example: how would any proposed open land actually be managed? What happens in practice with litter, dog fouling, or anti-social behaviour? And what assurances are there that this "public access land" would not simply become a stepping stone to further development?

Last night I asked Read Parish Council to do three things:

Firstly, formally highlight the inadequacies of this consultation to both the developer and Planning Team. Secondly, scrutinise the reality and long-term viability of the proposed parkland open to the public.

Thirdly, engage directly with our group, so that future representations are informed, coordinated, and truly reflective of local feeling.

We all recognise the need for new housing—but it must be in the right place, with the right infrastructure, and aligned to local needs. The proposed development meets none of these criteria.

Even at this early stage, the strength of opposition in the local area is clear. We ask for your support in ensuring it is properly heard. - Thank you.