

# SIMONSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

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<b>Date:</b>	07 May 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), 3 members of the public		
<b>Meeting started:</b>	19:39	<b>Meeting closed:</b>	21.15

## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL 260705/

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Accepted: Cllr Malcolm Peplow.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS.

Cllr Pollard declared an interest as secretary for the Martholme Greenway (item 14). If required to leave the meeting to discuss the item on the agenda, Cllr Pollard requested dispensation to speak on this item. Cllr Pollard doesn't believe he needs to request a dispensation; Cllr Pollard read an extract from the Local Government Association: when a matter arises that directly relates to your financial interest or wellbeing of yourself or a relative, you must declare an interest. You may speak on matter, but only if members of the public are allowed to speak. Therefore, Cllr Pollard asks if members of the public are allowed to speak, is he? Cllr Peat says this will be covered when we get to the item.

Cllr Hampson declared an interest as a magistrate on item 16.

### 3. TO ELECT A CHAIR FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS.

Cllr Peat elected (Cllr McKelvey proposed, Cllr Finn seconded). Cllr Peat signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

### 4. TO ELECT A VICE CHAIR FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS.

Cllr Finn elected (Cllr Vaughton proposed, Cllr Pollard seconded).

### 5. FOR CHAIR TO SIGN THE DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE FORM.

Signed.

### 6. APPOINTMENTS AND NOMINATIONS FOR PARISH ACTIVITIES:

#### 6.1 TO APPOINT AN INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS.

*THE CURRENT AUDITOR IS DAVID SWIFT – APPOINTED FOR 2026 AND 2027 ON 22 MAY 2025.*

#### 6.2 TO APPOINT A REPRESENTATIVE(S) TO THE RVBC PARISH COUNCIL LIAISON MEETING.

*Cllrs. Peat and Hampson.*

#### 6.3 TO APPOINT TWO REPRESENTATIVE(S) TO LALC.

*Cllrs. Peat and Hampson.*

**6.4 LIAISON WITH BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS.**

*Cllr. Peat.*

**6.5 COORDINATION OF PLANNING COMMENTS.**

*Dr Anna Haines (clerk).*

**6.6 MONITORING AND LIAISON ON ALL ASPECTS OF SPC LENGTHSMAN, ACTIVITIES INVOLVING LCC PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (PROW), REPORTING DEFECTS ETC.**

*Cllr. Pollard*

**6.7 ACTIVITIES INVOLVING LCC HIGHWAYS, ROAD SAFETY AND STREET LIGHTING, REPORTING DEFECTS ETC.**

*Cllr. Hampson.*

**6.8 COORDINATION AND LIAISON WITH OTHER PARISH COUNCILS, SOCIAL GROUPS, AND COORDINATING CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES.**

*Cllrs. Finn and Vaughton.*

**6.9 WEBSITE UPDATE.**

*Dr Anna Haines (clerk).*

**6.10 UPDATE SOCIAL MEDIA (INCLUDING FACEBOOK).**

*Cllrs. Vaughton and Hampson.*

**6.11 PRODUCE A PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER.**

*Cllr. Vaughton*

**6.12 DATA PROTECTION OFFICER.**

*Dr Anna Haines (clerk).*

**7. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 22 MAY 2025.**

Approved at the July 2025 Parish Council meeting.

## **ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL 260705/**

### **1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Covered under items 14 & 16.

### **2. TO APPROVE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 5 MARCH 2026.**

Cllr Hampson thinks it would have been more accurate to say that after opening remarks Cllr Pollard removed himself from the room.

Vote on whether to amend minutes (1 in favour of amending (Cllr Hampson), 6 in favour of leaving minutes as they are). Minutes approved.

### **3. AUDIT AND FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

The Clerk submitted a report seeking approval as a correct record the Financial Statements to 31 March 2026 and documenting the internal auditors' report.

Chair signed the Certificate of Exemption: Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/2026.

Chair signed Section 1: AGAR 2025/2026.

Chair signed Section 2: AGAR 2025/2026.

The clerk submitted the Finance Report to 30 April 2026 (Appendix I).

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

Approve the:

- Accounts to date.
- Schedule of Payments.
- Reconciliation of Receipts and Payments.
- General and earmarked budgets.

Cllr Hampson requested budget to be earmarked for clerk CILCA training and said she will report back on funding available for this in coming meetings.

### **4. REVIEW THE COUNCIL'S POLICIES, PROCEDURES, REGISTERS AND REGULATIONS.**

The social media policy needs to be revisited – a clause talks about parish councillors not being able to talk about being part of SPC on social media. Tweaks to make it less restrictive. Also, the website policy. Pull out and bring to next meeting.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

- Bring grants policy out of archives and bring to next meeting.
- Revisit social media policy and website policy at next meeting.
- Agree all other policies.

### **5. APPROVE MEETING DATES FOR 2026-2027. (SUGGESTED DATES):**

2 July, 3 September and 5 November. 2026: 7 January and 4 March, starting at 7.15 pm.

Accept proposed dates, and move meeting start time going forward to the later time of 7.15 pm.

### **6. PARISH PLAN 2026.**

#### **6.1 TO APPROVE THE PARISH PLAN**

Approved.

#### **6.2 TO AUTHORISE DISTRIBUTION AMONG APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES – COUNTY HIGHWAYS, POLICE, ETC.**

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

- Send around plan to key contacts plus pull out the part that refers to them and highlight. Clerk will be the key point of contact, who will feed back to the Lead Councillor Cllr Duckworth and the working group (i.e. same team who put the plan together).
  - Look to update the bypass plan.
7. **PEACE POLE.** Report from the clerk confirming that this is to be a permanent fixture if placed in the parish gardens.  
RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL: agree to have peace pole installed.
8. **NOTICE BOARD REPAIRS.** Report from the clerk requesting the purchase of a new noticeboard on Whalley Road at the Parish Garden, as the old one is in a state of disrepair.  
RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL: Remove the existing board entirely (Cllr Pollard to ask lengthsman to remove).
9. **DEFIBRILLATOR.** Update on installation status.  
RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL: Cllr Finn to ring John Hazelwood and chase up.
10. **SCHOOL FOOTPATH:** Report of the clerk summarising the latest footpath news, including number of use of evidence forms returned, risk assessment, and comments by Simonstone School.  
RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL: send in DMMO to LCC. Clerk to write covering letter, ask LCC to consider points of view of all different path users.
11. **SCHOOL TRANSPORT COSTS:** Report from Cllr Hampson.  
RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL: Put comment on Facebook asking people to comment on school transport costs. To be confirmed at next meeting.
12. **LAMPLIGHT PROGRESS:** Report from Cllr Hampson on Lamplight ceremony proceedings.  
There is nothing in June; everything is happening in November. The official Lamplight of Peace ceremony will be at 11 am. The Church have their own plans. SPC can take lead at dusk. Don't want to duplicate what is happening on Remembrance Sunday.  
RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL: Cllr Vaughton to speak with Rev Sue about deadlines. Repeat what done previously with lantern, and make sure resident know all are welcome.
13. **CCTV:** Report from the clerk on the latest CCTV installation.  
CCTV is now installed, courtesy of SPC and a grant from RVBC. Someone has removed sign for CCTV. Software is installed on clerk's phone for time being as user admin rights need changing on laptop.  
RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:
- Contact USE IT to sort out admin right.
  - Purchase a smartphone for parish council – not on one person, so can pass on to someone when clerk is on leave.
14. **LETTER TO LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLORS ON LCWIP FUNDING (PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, JOHN BARKER FROM MARTHOLME GREENWAY).**  
Report provided by Cllr pollard, providing clarity on Martholme Greenway route and surrounding cycleway routes, with letter to LCC asking if local cycle and walking funding could be used to address landowner concerns. Martholme Greenway are asking if Simonstone Parish Council will agree to send this to LCC.  
Cllr pollard objects to not being able to participate in discussion at March meeting.  
Cllr Peat stated that having seen Cllr Pollard's report, it is very clear on the routes of the cycle way.  
Cllr Hampson objected to waiving rules on dispensation of declaring interests. If you have a personal interest, you should not be allowed to participate. We, as a parish council, have no powers to grant

footpath ownership or change rules. We can only represent resident views, and we don't have a clear idea of these at this point. Cllr Hampson would like a thorough open consultation put forward to resident, looking at the potential impacts.

Cllr Duckworth wanted clarity on who receives LCWIP funding, what is it used for and who is responsible for managing it. Response: The money goes to LCC and they manage it, they take on job of putting path in, negotiating with landowners. The money will be used to put a footpath all way through from Padiham bypass to Great Harwood.

John Barker (member of public) stated that this agenda item is purely about this letter and has nothing to do with the parish plan, although this highlights that 70 % of those who responded to the question supported the extension of the Martholme greenway. If there is a need to have another consultation on Martholme Greenway, the council would also need to do this for each item on the parish plan separately.

Cllr Peat stated that this agenda item was brought back due to the lack of clarity about route. It has been brought back now with clarity on route. We are just interested in our patch.

Cllr Hampson said that when this item was discussed in March, we agreed that Martholme Greenway would send their own letter which they would have full control over, and then if they want us to send our letter of support we could do.

Cllr Peat – SPC asked for 2 things – clarity on route and to send letter from Martholme Greenway to this PC in full saying that they would welcome Simonstone Parish Council's views.

Cllr Hampson would like to do a consultation in the summer to show people all of what is being proposed in the area. Cllr Peat highlighted the issue on timing on this. We need to give Martholme Greenway chance to write to us formally and decide on this.

John Barker said that the greenway and a bypass are two sperate issues, and they do not have to be in the same place. Cllr Pollard stated that there would be no reason why both couldn't go side by side.

Chair propose – Martholme Greenway write to Simonstone Parish Council, saying that they are very clear on route, and that they would like a letter saying SPC are comfortable with this. (Cllr Rob seconded, unanimous vote in favour).

Cllr Hampson was uncomfortable to the language included in the agenda pack for this item. Clerk to send reports to be included in pack to Chair in first instance going forwards.

John Barker – There seems to be some objection to discussing anything outside of the parish boundaries (minutes of last meeting). It was suggested that SPC shouldn't be supporting anything outside of boundaries, particularly regarding landowners in Read. How do you limit yourself to only supporting something inside of your boundary? Hammond Ground has been discussed today, but not landowners in Read. This is significant for the whole community. Martholme Greenway extends outside of the Simonstone boundary, who object just to this and not to other things.

Cllr Peat – we want to move forward in a progressive way across the two communities.

15. **LENGTHSMAN QUOTE FOR BENCH BY RIVER CALDER:** REPORT FROM THE CLERK OUTLINING COSTINGS. Cllr Hampson has requested a diagram of where the bench is located.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

- Accept quote and move forwards.

16. **HGV AND TRACTORS DRIVING ALONG SIMONSTONE LANE: REPORT FROM THE CLERK (ENCLOSED) ON RESIDENT'S COMPLAINTS OF HGV'S DRIVING ALONG UNSUITABLE ROUTES, PUBLIC PARTICIATION** Residents present who live on Simonstone Lane. There is a problem with the speed of vehicles (80 % are speeding); by the time they reach our house they are doing 50 mph. The signage is inadequate

indicating the 30-mph speed limit. The second problem is overweight prohibited vehicles using the route (7.5 tonne limit). Huge tractors with large trailers are driving at speed with mobile phones in their hand. None of this is being policed, and is happening at 2 am, with the vehicles cutting up verges. , LCC don't seem interested; the residents have spoken to someone from Highways and have written to our MP who forwarded the letter to highways. They were told this isn't a problem until someone has died. The residents have been told to report these on the LCC website with photos, which they have. They have also spoken to the police, who have said it is up to LCC to change signs.

Cllr Pollard – all we can do is go to the police and say Simonstone Parish Council are very concerned about damage caused to property down Simonstone lane by vehicles. We can contact PCSO although she has no powers to enforce. as far as speeding is concerned, we do get speed cameras down at the bottom.

Cllr Hampson is aware that have been many issues on Simonstone Lane. There was going to be a pilot scheme looking at speeding of overweight vehicles. Cllr Hampson can talk separately and put a package together with the residents to approach LCC with.

Cllr Peat: we have heard what you say, we understand and we want to help you. We will send a letter from Simonstone Parish Council, and Cllr Hampson will help put together a package sent on behalf of the parish council. We can also address this through the parish plan.

17. **REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL MEETINGS:** Report from the clerk on the Parish plan community energy scheme.

It was questioned whether Simonstone has the capacity to take this forward as a parish council.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL: Put something about this in the next newsletter for resident's views.

18. **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)

The Clerk reminded members that comments on planning applications are collated by the clerk, who submits the comments to RVBC.

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

Note the report.

19. **CRIME FIGURES.**

The Clerk submitted a report updating members on the latest crime statistics up to April 2026 as provided by PCSO Katie Ferguson (Appendix II).

RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL:

Note the report.

20. **CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA.**

**COUNCILLOR VACANCY** – no-one has applied. RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL: Readvertise.

**LGR** – structure for Lancashire will be announced in July. Elections will take place 12 months from now. All we don't know is what will happen to us as we are due for re-election in May 2027.

**LALC GOING THROUGH RESTRUCTURING PROCESS** – Hoped that something would be put out to all parish councils, but spring conference has been cancelled. Hopefully something can be brought to September meeting. £10 for area secretary – RV to uplift area secretary fee. Clerk to send bill to Cllr Hampson.

**INSURANCE NEEDS RENEWING AT END OF MAY** – agree to accept within certain percentage of previous years (10-15 %). Otherwise deal with by email

**21. BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORT (APPENDIX III).**

**22. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

None as yet.

*Dr Anna Haines*

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

Appendix I

<b>April 2026 Account reporting</b>		
<b>Payments</b>		
Date	Item	Amount
01/04/2026	Easy Websites	£ 62.04
14/04/2026	ICO registration fee 2026-27	£ 52.00
14/04/2026	BP to Anna Haines clerk slaray April 26	£ 402.90
14/04/2026	LALC Data Protection training clerk	£ 20.00
14/04/2026	BP to David Scott bus shelter cleaning Mar 26	£ 60.00
16/04/2026	USE IT computers 50876	£ 19.56
16/04/2026	USE IT computers 50740	£ 4.20
28/04/2026	BP to Anna Haines folder dividers	£ 2.19
28/04/2026	BP to David Swift for internal audit 25/26	£ 125.00
30/04/2026	Bank service charge	£ 7.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>£ 754.89</b>
<b>Receipts</b>		
Date	Item	Amount
08/04/2026	RVBC Precept	£ 9,500.00
13/04/2026	RVBC SPF CCTV	£ 1,000.00
27/04/2026	Sabden Parish Council Lengthsman reimb	£ 387.84
28/04/2026	HMRC VAT reclaim	£ 1,134.71
<b>Total</b>		<b>£ 12,022.55</b>
<b>Bank accounts</b>		
	Unity Current:	£ 3,067.65
	Unity Savings:	£ 16,113.50
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 19,181.15</b>
	Balance brought forward	£ 7,913.49
	Difference from previous month	£ 11,267.66
<b>Bank reconciliation</b>		
	Receipts - Payments	£ 11,267.66
	Difference from previous month	£ 11,267.66
	Do these amounts match?	YES

		Actual Income												
	Stream	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	Total
RVBC Precept	Precept	9,500.00												9,500.00
HMRC VAT Return	VAT Repay	1,134.71												1,134.71
RVBC Grants	Grants	1,000.00												1,000.00
Concurrent Funding	Grants													0.00
Other Grants	Grants													0.00
Bank interest	Bank													0.00
Tax rebate/refund	Rebates, refunds and switches	387.84												387.84
Account switch	Rebates, refunds and switches													0.00
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>12,022.55</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>12,022.55</b>

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		Actual Expenditure															
	Stream	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	Total	Budget	Rem.	
Clerk Salary	Admin. Exp.	402.90	402.90	402.90	402.90	402.90	402.90	402.90	402.90	402.90	402.90	402.90	402.90	4,834.80	5,709.99	875.19	
HMRC Income Tax	Admin. Exp.		10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	110.00	149.50	39.50	
Clerk Expenses	Admin. Exp.	2.19	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	167.19	150.00	-17.19	
Payroll services	Admin. Exp.													0.00	149.47	149.47	
Use-It	Admin. Exp.	23.76	23.76	23.76	23.76	23.76	23.76	23.76	23.76	23.76	23.76	23.76	23.76	285.12	382.48	97.36	
Easy Web/web site	Admin. Exp.	62.04	62.04	62.04	62.04	62.04	62.04	62.04	62.04	62.04	62.04	62.04	62.04	744.48	690.56	-53.92	
Training	Admin. Exp.	20.00												20.00	259.11	239.11	
Audit	Admin. Exp.	125.00												125.00	125.00	0.00	
Lisence fees/subscriptions	Admin. Exp.	52.00												52.00	51.90	-0.10	
Insurance	Admin. Exp.													0.00	243.53	243.53	
Bank charges	Admin. Exp.	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	84.00	74.00	-10.00	
Room Hire	Admin. Exp.													0.00	250.00	250.00	
Other admin	Admin. Exp.													0.00	200.00	200.00	
RVBC Bins	Amenity Exp.													0.00	561.34	561.34	
Lengthsman/Other Maint	Amenity Exp.													0.00	1500	1,500.00	
Defrib./Bus Shelter	Amenity Exp.	60.00												60.00	386.03	326.03	
Other amenity	Amenity Exp.													0.00	155.7	155.70	
Grants/contributions	Sundry Exp.													0.00	500	500.00	
Remembrance/Other	Sundry Exp.													0.00	200	200.00	
Christmas	Sundry Exp.													0.00	500	500.00	
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>754.89</b>	<b>520.70</b>	<b>520.70</b>	<b>520.70</b>	<b>520.70</b>	<b>520.70</b>	<b>520.70</b>	<b>520.70</b>	<b>520.70</b>	<b>520.70</b>	<b>520.70</b>	<b>520.70</b>	<b>6,482.59</b>	12,238.61	5,756.02	

Budget pots	Amount 1st April 2026	Expenditure	Amount 31st Mar 2027
Expenses	12,238.61	754.89	11,483.72
General reserves	3661.978		
PROW	252.5		
Earmarked reserves	2,730.40		

## Appendix II

The table below shows the crime statistics for various months. The category previously listed as 'road' has been split into 'road-related offence' and 'road traffic collision'.

**Table Key:** TFV = Theft from Vehicle. DTV= Damage to Vehicle. ASB = Anti- Social Behaviour . CD Criminal Damage

Period	Category													Total
	Burglar y	Drugs	TFV	Road- related offence	Road traffic collision	Robber y	Theft	DTV	Assault	ASB	Public order offence	CD	Other	
April '26				3	2			1		1				7
Mar '26			2	4	2				1					9
Feb '26			1	1	1		1				1			5
Jan '26	1			1	2		2		1	4		1		12
Dec. '25	2				3		1		1	1				8
Nov. '25					3		1		2	0	1	2		9
Oct. '25	1			1	1				4			1		8
Sept. '25	1		1	1			1		1			1		6
August '25	1			1	1		4		1	1		2	1	12
July '25		1	1		1				1					4
June '25				3	1		2		2					8
May '25	1			1	5		1		3					11
April '25				2	3		1			4				10
March '25			1	4	1					4				10
Feb. '25			1	2	2		1							6
January '25								1	2	1				4
Dec.'24		1		1	4		1							7
Nov. '24				3						1				4
October '24				2	3		1			1		2		9
Sept. '24								1	1			1		3
August '24				4				1						5
June'24							1			4				5
April '24	2	1	1											4
October '23	1			1		1	2							5
August '23				1			1	1						3
July '23	1		1				2	2	1	1				8
June '23	1						1		3				1	6
May '23	1		1						1	2		1		6
<b>Total:</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>194</b>

## Appendix III

### **BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT TO SIMONSTONE PARISH COUNCIL ON 7 MAY 2026.**

I received reports from residents about crater-sized potholes on School Lane and one on Clough Lane in recent weeks which I followed up with Lancashire County Council (LCC) as the Highways Authority. I have previously encouraged residents to use the 'LoveCleanStreets' app to report highways faults directly to LCC whenever possible and hope they are having more success than me because this app has ceased to work on my iPhone despite me re-installing it twice. Previously, I had some other routes available to me as a Borough Councillor:

1/ Report by email to the Highways District Lead Officer

2/ Visit the Whalley Highways Depot and speak to a Highways Officer face to face.

Unfortunately, since the elections in May 2025, the Highways District Lead team mailbox has been closed, the number of staff in the Whalley Depot has fallen by half, staff say they are rotated and I am no longer able to speak face to face with an operational Highways Officer. In my opinion, these developments have taken us backwards in terms of accessibility and accountability.

The pothole repairs are now being undertaken by a private subcontractor using a specialist piece of plant after which repairs are guaranteed. In principle, this has got its merits, but I have seen very large patch repairs carried out where only isolated potholes were present. Conversely on School Lane, temporary localised filling has been done once again to potholes that become like craters on a frequently recurring basis. Of all roads, School Lane desperately needs resurfacing or at least 'large patches', particularly the section between Whalley Road and St Peter's CE Primary School. If there are technical reasons for this, these have not been communicated to me.

Moving onto local government reorganisation. The Government's online public consultation on this issue which is crucial for the future shape of local government in the Ribble Valley ended in late March this year. The Government's announcement of which of the five options for re-organisation has been selected is expected to be made this summer and this will show us the future footprint of the new larger unitary council of which Ribble Valley will form a part. At this stage, it would not be helpful to speculate on the outcome but is worth repeating that of the five options put to the Government in November last year, Ribble Valley's preference was for the one that would see us merge with Preston and Lancaster Councils.

We have now held two Councillor Drop-in Sessions in the Hub Room at Read and Simonstone Village Hall on the last Wednesday in February and April. These have brought us a lot closer to the very well attended café mornings, making it easy for residents to cross the corridor to speak with us about any Council problems. Our Drop-in sessions are continuing on Saturday mornings from 10-11 in this Hall on the last Saturday of each month, the most recent being held in March. We feel that weekday and weekend sessions give more people the chance to see us if they need to and will continue with these arrangements going forward.

I am very pleased to confirm that the Martholme Greenway Group has been awarded a £12000 grant from the Jubilee Fund towards the cost of resurfacing the path from Simonstone Lane to Gooseleach Wood which will be a major improvement for everyone who enjoys this walk come rain or shine. It was a pleasure for me to be able to support the Group's application by speaking on the Working Group and in Committee. I'd like to thank the

Group for their hard work in preparing the successful bid and this Parish Council for confirming its support for the project to Ribble Valley Borough Council.

As reported in the media, three further Councillors have defected to Reform, one from Conservative and two from Independent, bringing Reform's total to four. As Ribble Valley Borough Council remains in No Overall Control, we will have to wait until Annual Council next Tuesday to receive confirmation of the make-up of the ruling administration for 2026-27.

Councillor Malcolm Peplow

6 May 2026

DRAFT