



Simonstone Parish Plan

This is an abbreviated version of the Parish Plan. This abbreviated version omits the following information:

- a) the unedited residents' responses to the relevant questionnaire*
- b) the 'Facts & Figures' that provide some basic data that describes the parish.*

A copy of the complete Parish Plan is available on request from:

*Mr Roger Hirst, Clerk to Simonstone Parish Council, or on the parish website at:
<http://simonstone.org.uk>*

This document was approved by Simonstone Parish Council on 12th September 2013.

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1. What is the Parish Plan

The Simonstone Parish Plan is a community-led plan that endeavours to determine the future of the community and how it may change for the better. The Parish Plan documents the socio-economic and environmental issues of the community and its proposed remedies and actions: it sets out a vision for the future of the parish and outlines how that vision can be achieved in an action plan. The Parish Plan is a document setting out how we, the residents and the business community, want to see the area develop over the next few years. It covers a range of issues, and gives us a recognised voice.

The Simonstone Parish Plan is produced in order to contribute to and influence the decision making at the District Level. The Plan is essential to ensure that any future changes take into account the wishes and needs of the local community.

The Parish Plan development process includes:

- a parish appraisal – a household questionnaire to assess issues, needs and aspirations of local people
- participatory appraisals – hands-on interactive workshops
- a business appraisal - an invitation to comment on issues and needs of local businesses
- the subsequent creation of an action plan

For the Plan to have weight, it needs to be able to demonstrate that all of the residents have had an opportunity to give their input, and that the key conclusions are those of the parish and not personal opinions of the authors ie the parish council.

The development of the Plan has been managed by the parish council, but has involved the residents and employers/businesses operating within the parish. The council kick-started the planning process by calling upon a Steering Group from the community. This Steering Group produced questionnaires covering all aspects of the parish considered to be relevant. The questionnaires were then posted to all residences and businesses within the parish, and the responses collated. The residential questionnaires completed and returned were in excess of 30% of those distributed, which is considered to be a good response to an exercise of this nature, and in which it is incumbent upon the residents to hand deliver their completed forms to a central location. A business questionnaire was issued to each business operating within the parish boundaries: of 31 business questionnaires issued 9 (27%) were completed and returned. However, it should be noted that with one exception the large(r) businesses did not respond.

The responses are presented in summary at Appendix 1 of this document and are included within the plan as an evidence base and justification for the actions arising.

The completed Parish Plan, reflecting the wishes of the parish, is shown at Appendix 2 of this document. The parish council will make best endeavours to ensure that the Plan is implemented. Whilst the parish council, has only limited authority for direct action, it will nevertheless manage the implementation of those action items that fall within its powers, and where actions fall outside of the council's authority it will use the Parish Plan to influence the higher authorities.

2. Objectives/Purpose

The objectives in preparing this plan are:

- To prepare and finalise a Parish Plan by 30th September 2013
- To have consulted the residents on the content of the Plan
- To identify and put forward recommendations relevant to the community on issues affecting:
 - quality of life
 - social cohesion
 - future of the parish
- To submit the Plan to the local planning authority at Ribble Valley Borough Council
- To share parts of the Plan with other relevant authorities
- To provide a focus for community action on key issues over the coming years.

This Plan provides an opportunity to identify local priorities, so that residents and businesses can express their vision for facilities, services, and land usage.

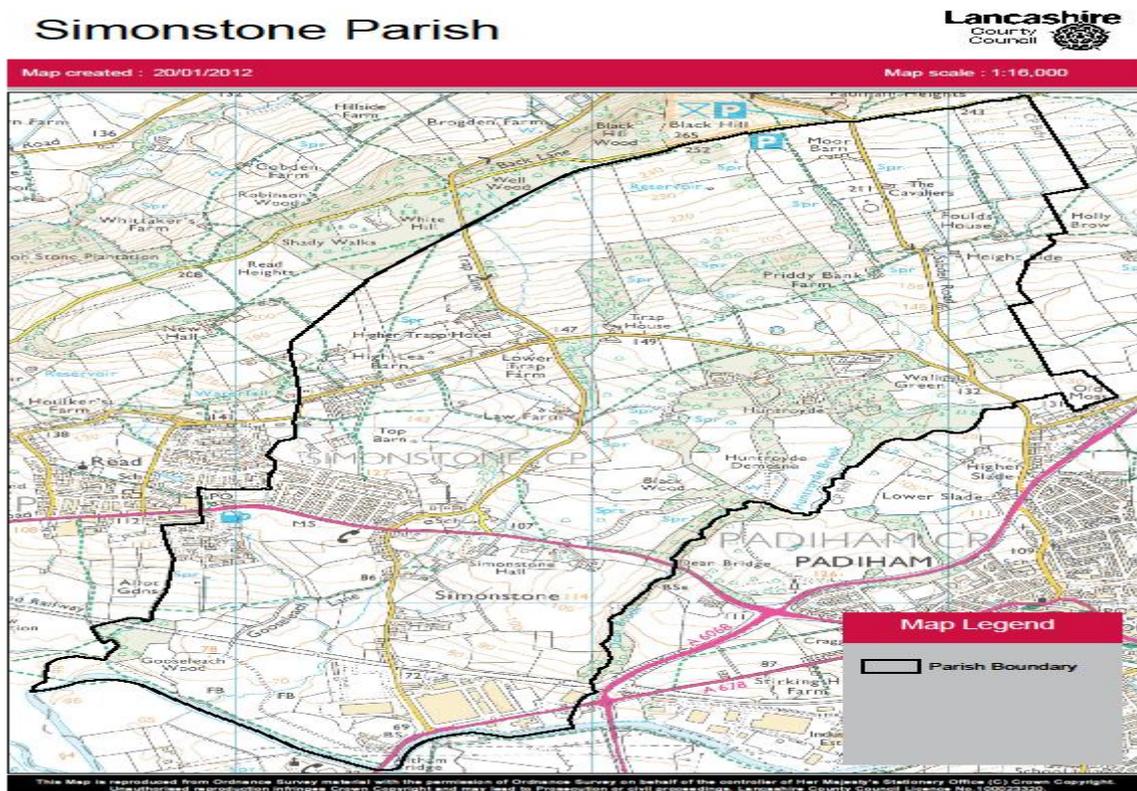
3. Simonstone Parish

Simonstone is a small parish located in the south-easterly corner of the Ribble Valley and dating back to the 13th century. The historical centre of the parish straddles the A671 between Padiham and Whalley and is located at the junction of School Lane and Simonstone Lane. At this location can be found the village church and school. These latter named lanes are the oldest roads in the locality being part of the former "King's Highway", joining Lancaster and Manchester. The house at the School cross-roads is the former Toll Bar.

The parish centre, in terms of housing and activity would probably be recognised as being at the junction of Whalley Road and Fountains Avenue where the local pub, shop, and garage can be located.

At the parish boundary to the north of the village lies Whitehill Woods and Shady Walks; to the south the parish it is bounded by the River Calder; the eastern boundary lies beyond Sabden Road, whereas the western boundary is ill-defined but crosses Whins Lane at Haugh Head Farm and at a more southerly point crosses Whalley Road at the village garage and shop.

'Greenspace', as in agricultural land and woodlands etc occupies approximately 85% of the area of the parish. Land dedicated to businesses and industry represents approximately 6% of the area, and that occupied by houses and gardens some 4%. The remainder is taken by roads, footpaths, water etc. Land to the north and east of the Simonstone village is primarily farming land; the farms being tenanted from the Huntroyd Estate. To the south the village is bounded by the River Calder, adjacent to which can be found a busy industrial estate accommodating Fort Vale Engineering , Dept of Work & Pensions, Seaways, and the Time Technology Park that accommodates many small(er) businesses.



4. Residential Issues Raised and Associated Actions

Following the 'accepted' process for the production of a Parish Plan a Steering Group was formed within the parish tasked with producing a questionnaire that focussed on a number of key aspects of the community and community life. The questionnaire was posted to each and every household within the parish. A summarised version of the completed questionnaires, which represents the views of some 30% (well above the 'normal' level of response for such processes) of the parish households, appears at Appendix 1 of this document.

The following is designed to reflect the wishes of the residents, and is derived from summaries of the responses to each of the key aspects of the questionnaire. Also used in developing the Plan, but excluded from this document, are some basic data describing the parish, extracted from the ONS Census surveys of 2001 and 2011. Each of the following sub-sections is focussed upon a key aspect of the parish plan eg housing, traffic, services etc as posed in the parish plan questionnaire. For each of these generic subjects a description is provided that represents:

- a summary of the responses to the relevant questions contained within the parish plan questionnaire,
- the status of the subject in the modern-day parish of Simonstone: much of this is based on the Census data.
- the actions to be taken in response to the issues raised by the questionnaire responses.

It should be noted that several of the issues raised within the resident's questionnaire are already the subject of actions and/or discussions between the Parish Council and the higher authorities.

4.1 Housing

Simonstone village originally grew along the highways that cross the parish. Houses were built along Whalley Road, and Whins Lane following east-west routes through the parish, and along School Lane and Simonstone Lane along a north-south route. There was a focus around the church school and at a later date around Victoria Mill.

In the 1960's/70's the estates of Fountains Avenue and Carleton Avenue were built and today these provide more than half of the current dwellings in the parish.

The housing stock of 479 units (excluding working farms and halls) comprises:

- Detached house or bungalow 310
- Semi detached house or bungalow 54
- Terraced house or cottage 110

439 households are owner-occupied, with 37 private rented properties.

- There are 103 one person households.
- There are no flats or apartments.
- There is no affordable housing or sheltered housing.
- There are only three residences with tenure rented from the local authority and/or housing association.

At the time of writing, no sites have been identified for development within the Ribble Valley's planning document - 'The Core Strategy'.

A large majority (73%) of the residents responding expressed that they do not wish to see the character of the village changed by the construction of more houses in Simonstone. However, in the event that additional houses were to be constructed it is deemed that sheltered housing is the type most in need, with lesser but significant demand for affordable housing and large family houses. Given the ageing population of the parish it is possible that the demand for large family houses could be balanced by the requirement for downsizing and for sheltered housing.

For planning purposes the following approximate figures are provided for consideration:

- The population of the parish has been almost static for the last 10 years, however the 'over 65' age group has grown by 19%, whereas the 0 to 24 years age group has grown by only 3%.
- 26% of the households are 'all pensioner'
- 13% of households are 'one person - pensioner'
- Approximately 15% of the population of the village is providing unpaid care.

Recommended Actions

1. The responses regarding housing requirements and preferences will be provided to the District Planning Authority with a request that this information is included in the next update

of the District Plan. Given the response and the age profile of the Simonstone population particular emphasis will be placed on the evidential demand for sheltered housing.

2. If the appropriate opportunity arises the Parish Council will take advice on direct action regarding the development of sheltered housing.

4.2 Pedestrians & Cyclists

4.2.1 Road Crossings

Residents of Simonstone village have serious difficulties negotiating Whalley Road at its junction with Fountains Avenue.

Whalley road is extremely busy, carrying in excess of 5000 vehicles per day through the middle of the Simonstone residential area. Pedestrians, including many schoolchildren, are more often than not faced with a prolonged wait and personal risk when crossing the road. The Fountains Avenue estate is occupied by approximately 230 residents, and the only exit from the estate is onto Whalley Road. Residents of the estate are obliged to cross the busy main road if they wish to access the village's only shop, garage, or public house.

Bus stops are located at each side of the Fountains Avenue/Whalley Road junction. Those living on the northern side of Whalley Road and wishing to catch a bus into the Ribble Valley are obliged to cross the road, as are those living on the south side and wishing to catch a bus to Padiham, Burnley etc. There is a further bus stop at the junction of Whalley Road and Simonstone Lane.

There are no road markings nor road furniture that assist safe pedestrian crossings at either of the above locations.

The residents of Simonstone are almost unanimous (86% of respondents) in their demand for pedestrian crossings on Whalley Road. Two locations are identified as focal points: the junction of Fountains Avenue and Whalley Road, and the junction of Simonstone Lane and Whalley Road. The demand for a pedestrian crossing at the former location is also supported by the village retail businesses as described in section 5.2 of this document.

In spring of 2013, the Parish Council discussed with the LCC Highways Authority the need for a pedestrian crossing and/or some road management system at the junction of Fountains Avenue and Whalley Road. It was agreed that a traffic and pedestrian measurement exercise would be carried in order to determine the risks and needs.

Recommended Actions

To continue current dialogue with LCC Highways Authority (Environment Directorate), regarding the pressing need for a pedestrian crossings at

a) the junction of Fountains Avenue and Whalley Road

b) the junction of Simonstone Lane and Whalley Road.

4.2.2 Walkway/Cycleway

The disused railway line running from Great Harwood to Padiham and Rosegrove presents itself as a ready-made walkway and cycleway that could encourage reduced dependence on cars and promote a healthier lifestyle.

To the east of the Simonstone and Read villages the 'Padiham Greenway' extends from a point near to Rosegrove, Burnley to the A6068 link road adjacent to the Department of

Works & Pensions at Simonstone. Lancashire County Council proposes to extend the Greenway along Blackburn Road and Barrowford Road in order to provide access between the Greenway and Time Technology Park. To the west of the villages the route passes over the Martholme viaduct and continues to Great Harwood. The 800 metre length of disused track between Dunkirk Farm Lane and the Martholme viaduct is privately owned and closed to the public. Beyond this section the track at the Hyndburn side of the viaduct has been developed and incorporated into the Lancashire Cycleway.

With the exception of one 800m stretch, there would be a cycle/walkway stretching from Gt Harwood to the westerly edge of Burnley. This would provide a facility for healthy lifestyles, and cheap and carbon-free passage.

75% of respondents are in favour of extending the cycle/walkway through Simonstone.

Read Parish Council are, at the time of writing, making efforts to have the viaduct reopened: Simonstone Parish Council is providing its support for this action.

Recommended Actions

To work with other interested parish councils to achieve the reopening of the footpath that follows the disused railway track along the 800 metre length between Dunkirk Farm Lane and the Martholme viaduct, and to have the complete footpath from Great Harwood to Padiham Greenway included in the definitive map.

4.3 Traffic

In general, speeds on the through roads of the parish do not cause concern. However, traffic volumes and parking have been, and continue to be, the source of much concern.

Approximate traffic volumes into and/or through the parish on a daily basis are:

- Through traffic on Whalley Road approx 5000 vehicles
- Traffic on Trapp Lane approx 800 vehicles
- Simonstone residents travelling out to work in cars and/or motorcycles - 460 vehicles
- Incoming worker vehicles to Fort Vale Engineering, DWP, and Time Technology Park - 420 vehicles
- School traffic (staff, and parents delivering children) incoming to the parish - 110 vehicles.

The following traffic related problems are generally recognised as being the major sources of concern within Simonstone parish. These concerns have been raised on several occasions with the relevant authorities. The problems and the associated risks still persist.

The volumes of vehicles using Whalley Road on a daily basis is considered to be excessive and increasing (79% of those responding expressed this opinion). Although traffic *speed* on the road is not considered to be a major problem, the excessive *volumes* result in congestion, delays and risks in exiting side roads. There is significant risk to pedestrians crossing Whalley Road (see Section 4.2 above). Among the residents there is a renewed call for the provision of a bypass road and a 'cycle friendly' route.

Trapp Lane and School Lane connect with Simonstone Lane to form a North-South route from/to the Ribble Valley through the village. Trapp Lane is a single lane carriageway that carries vehicles to/from the junction of Whalley Road. The roads that connect Trapp Lane to Whalley Road are extremely narrow at School Lane and Clough Lane, such that HGV's (including emergency services vehicles) are unable to pass vehicles parked along these lanes.

Simonstone Lane has been described as a 'rat run' for commuting motorists. The lane currently requires both regular police camera checks and the installation of a speed indicator device (SPID) in order to control vehicle speeds.

To the north of the parish Whins Lane is a single lane carriageway that runs East-West, and carries relatively light local and commuter traffic, and is also a bus route. Both Whins Lane and Trapp Lane are single lane carriageways, and are designated with the National Speed Limit of 60mph. The speed limits currently in force on Back Lane, Trapp Lane, and Whins Lane are not considered to be an issue for the majority (66%) of residents. However, it is recognised that this may not be the case for those using those roads on a regular/frequent basis, and it is proposed that the speed limit on Whins Lane is reduced. This requirement has been forwarded to the Highways Authority.

The junction of Trapp Lane and Whins Lane offers no view of either road from the other ie it is a blind junction. Poor visibility at the junction of Trapp Lane and Whins Lane is the cause

of many accidents. A request for improved traffic management at this junction has been placed with the Highways Authority.

To the south of the parish, and completing the collection of through roads, Blackburn Road runs East-West and carries mainly heavy goods traffic to/from the local industrial estates and the M65 motorway. Several hundred 'worker' vehicles per day arrive at the businesses located along Blackburn Road and Simonstone Lane. Except for commuters, the traffic on Blackburn Road has little impact upon the residents of the village.

There are no public car parks in Simonstone, although public usage of the car park belonging to Thwaites Brewery and located opposite the Stork Hotel is not prohibited. The businesses located at the Blackburn Road business parks have dedicated car parks, however there is considerable spill-over onto Simonstone Lane. Although only a minority of residents (40%) report problems with parking and road access, the question has generated a significant number of comments. Much of the road access problem is associated with Whalley Road traffic volumes described above. The major parking issues are associated with the village school and are discussed at Section 4.6 below.

Recommended Actions

- 1. Whilst it is recognised that 'large' capital projects are unlikely to be funded under the current economic climate, the Parish Council will seek out and pursue possible avenues for the development of the 'shelved' bypass road.*
- 2. The Parish Council will continue its current dialogue with the LCC Highways Authority for a solution to the bottleneck(s) at the junctions of School Lane and Clough Lane with Whalley Road.*
- 3. The Parish Council will continue its current dialogue with the LCC Highways Authority and the Police for:*
 - a) a reduction of the speed limits in force along Trapp Lane and Whins Lane*
 - b) a suitable 'traffic management' system for the Whins Lane and Trapp Lane junction.*
 - c) retention of police speed checks on Whalley Road and Simonstone Lane.*
- 4. The parish council will maintain the deployment of SPID's on Whalley Road and Simonstone Lane.*

4.4 Amenities and Facilities

This section covers a number of relatively minor requirements and/or issues in the parish of Simonstone.

4.4.1 Grit bins, litter bins, and dog waste bins

These are fairly generously provided across the parish, provision being based upon local needs. However there remain one or two outstanding requirements.

- **Grit Bins:** The majority of residents (59%) are of the opinion that there are sufficient grit bins in situ. However, it is recognised that this is a very local issue and there is a call for additional units to be installed on the Fountains Avenue estate and on Woodside Road.

Grit Bins are currently located at:

- Woodfields, Whins Lane
 - Haugh Avenue
 - Scott Avenue
 - Lawrence Avenue
 - Bealey Avenue
 - Harewood Avenue junction with Whalley Road
 - Harewood Avenue junction with Lawrence Avenue
 - Fountains Avenue
- **Litter Bins :** A relatively small majority are of the opinion that there are sufficient litter bins in Simonstone: 53% share this opinion and 42% think there are insufficient. Litter Bins are currently located at:
 - Whalley Road, south side bus stop opposite Haugh Avenue
 - Whalley Road bus stop at the school
 - Whalley Road bus stop opposite garage
 - Fountains Avenue
 - Whalley Road junction with Haugh Avenue
 - Village shop
 - **Dog Waste Bins :** Approximately half of respondents (48%) are satisfied that there are sufficient bins in the village. Approximately half expressed concerns about such issues as the failure of dog owners to ensure that the bins are used, that there are too many dogs in the village, and that there are insufficient numbers of bins. Dog Waste Bins are currently located at:
 - Harewood Avenue access to the green
 - Whalley Road junction with Haugh Avenue

Recommended Actions

Each specific requirement for the above facilities will be considered annually. Where there is a demonstrable need the requirement will be brought to the attention of the relevant authority. In those instances where the authority refuses to provide the required facility the Parish Council may consider funding its provision and maintenance from the Parish Precept.

4.4.2 Wind Turbines

There are no wind turbines currently located in the parish, however a planning application has been submitted for a single turbine installation and there are observable installations located in adjoining parishes. The responses of residents to the questions on wind turbines are slightly confusing. Whereas a majority of 61% were against the installation of wind turbines in Simonstone, 69% stated that wind turbines of **any** height are unacceptable. However, it is clear that the residents are against their deployment locally.

Recommended Actions

In general, planning applications for the installation of wind turbines within the Simonstone parish boundary will not be supported by the Parish Council, unless there are specific local needs and/or considerations.

4.4.3 Shops

There is one 'mini-market' shop in the parish. The general consensus (73%) is that no more shops are needed in the village. Fruit and vegetables came top of the list of products in demand if another shop was to be opened.

Recommended Actions

The products identified as not being currently available, but being desirable, from the village store will be brought to the attention of the store owner/manager.

4.4.4 Youth Facilities

There is a Youth Council active in the parishes of Read and Simonstone. There are sports facilities currently available in Read, however the local youth have no meeting place nor youth club facility. The majority of residents responding are in favour of youth activities, focussing on a youth group (81%) that caters for the ages of 10 to 16 years. The types of activities requested is many and varied with no particular activity identified as a specific need.

Recommended Actions

The needs and provision of facilities for the youth of the parishes of Simonstone and Read will be pursued in cooperation with our colleagues of Read Parish Council.

4.4.5 Village Hall

Meetings and other social activities currently take place in the church hall; there is no 'village hall'. There is no great demand amongst the residents for a dedicated village hall; 67% were against the idea.

Recommended Actions

No action planned.

4.5 Services

There appears to be general satisfaction with the local provision of public transport, police services, however local communications services in the shape of broadband performance causes some concern.

The local bus service is considered adequate by 86% of the residents and the subject extracted very few comments. The current level of local policing appears to be about right, with almost half of residents (47%) stating that they are happy with the status quo: the most favoured comment is 'for an improved visible presence'.

The majority of residents (54%) considered the existing broadband service(s) to be unsatisfactory. However, according to BT's published programme for service enhancements broadband speeds will be enhanced significantly in 2014.

Recommended Actions

BT's 'high speed broadband' rollout programme for Ribble Valley will be monitored, and if required the needs of Simonstone residents and businesses will be pursued with Lancashire County Council's 'Broadband Programme Manager'.

4.6 School

St Peter's CE Primary School is situated on School Lane on a piece of land that is bordered on all sides by roads. Whalley Road forms the southerly border, Clough Lane is to the east, and School Lane to the west and north.

The original school was housed in the church building. In 1976 the new building was completed and the school transferred across. The church building continues to be used for music lessons, school meals, and for 'out of school' activities.

Since 1976 the new school building has seen several extensions to increase its capacity. Today the building has four classroom bases, resource areas, and administrative rooms. All of the classrooms have been extended over recent years and a new entrance, library, and group areas were completed in 2006.

The school provides places for children aged between 4 and 11. In line with the building development, the school has expanded its intake from approximately 50-60 pupils to 125 pupils. Whereas the original intake was from Read and Simonstone, the current intake includes more distant conurbations such as Padiham and Sabden with over 50% of the school's pupils being brought in from outlying districts.

The school therefore has expanded its capacity, its intake, and its geographic reach. However, the planning process appears not to have catered for the associated traffic and parking requirements. No upgrades/improvements have been made to the roadways surrounding the school, nor the parking facilities, in order to accommodate the increase in demand.

The parish council has taken every opportunity to bring the problem(s) to the attention of the higher authorities, but with no success to date.

The parish is a victim of the school's success, and an overwhelming majority of residents are now against any enlargement of the village school, with only 8% in favour of enlargement. The main reasons expressed for the antipathy are the associated traffic and parking issues, and that the school attracts many pupils from outside the immediate neighbourhood of Read and Simonstone. The subject of the School has attracted more comments than any other within the questionnaire (see pages 65 to 68).

Recommended Actions

1. Whilst the Parish Council is unable to dictate on intake policy, all efforts will be made to encourage the school to take local children first, and will communicate to the school and the appropriate authorities the wishes of the residents to limit the numbers of children attending the school.

2. The issues concerning traffic and parking on School Lane and local avenues will be pursued with the LCC Highways Authority and with the school's governing body.

4.7 Parish Garden and Flower Displays

In addition to the questions contained within the Parish Plan Questionnaire, additional comments were invited in order to cover topics that had not been specifically identified as important to residents. Of the comments provided the topic of 'Parish Garden and Flower Displays' was popular, with requests for additional flower beds and hanging baskets to be provided in the village and parish garden.

Recommended Actions

Within the constraints of the parish precept and any other overriding constraints the parish council will consider specific requests for the development of the parish garden and the provision of flower displays at preferred locations within the parish.

5. Business Issues and Associated Actions

Within its parish boundaries Simonstone accommodates a significant number of small and large businesses including: retail, public and private services, industrial, farming, and leisure. Several hundred workers are employed within the parish.

Land to the north and east of the Simonstone village is primarily farming land. The farms are tenanted from the Huntroyd Estate. Also located in this area of the parish are a number of smaller businesses including the garden centre, saw mill, hotel, and an outdoor activity centre.

The village shop, garage, car sales, and public house are to be found at the centre of the village on Whalley Road at the junction with Fountains Avenue.

The large(r) businesses are located to the south of the disused railway track, and bordering Blackburn Road and Simonstone Lane. These businesses, including Fort Vale Engineering , Dept of Work & Pensions, Seaways Services Ltd, and Time Technology Park employ substantial numbers of people. Time Technology Park accomodates several smaller businesses.



Following a similar process to that used for residential questionnaires, a business questionnaire, taking the form of a request for comment on a number of topics, was posted to each and every business within the parish. The completed questionnaires, which represented the views of some 29% of the businesses were collated and appear in full at Appendix 1 (Section 6.1.2) of this document. For completeness, the views of the representative of the village primary school are also included in this section. It should be noted that no responses were received from the larger employers and that those businesses responding employ a relatively small number of those people working within the Simonstone parish.

The businesses operating in the parish of Simonstone include:

- The village retail businesses, located at the centre of the village adjacent to the junction of Whalley Road and Fountains Avenue, and including the shop, public house, garage, and car sales.
- Those small(er), single operating units located within the lanes and countryside of the parish, including the saw mill, tree services, garden centre, hotel, and outdoor activity centre.
- The large(r) businesses located to the south of the disused railway track and adjacent to Blackburn Road, including Fort Vale Engineering, Seaways Services, Dept of Works & Pensions, and those businesses located on Time Technology Park.
- St Peter's CE primary school.

5.1 Planning

The business community were invited to comment and raise issues relating to future plans and employment needs.

The village retail businesses being restricted by the lack of development space and their location have no plans for future expansion of their operations and work forces. None of the smaller businesses have indicated that they have plans for growth in terms of site expansion and/or additional staff.

Of the large(r) businesses Seaways Services intends to expand its operations within its existing site boundaries, taking on additional staff. Fort Vale and Time Technology Park have growth capacity within their existing site boundaries.

The school has no current plans to expand, but will do so if required to meet demand for places. The school's intake and recruitment policies are outside the day to day influence of the parish and its council, however the concerns of the residents (as expressed in section 4.6 above) must be of consideration.

None of the businesses have expressed concerns regarding the planning processes and their application, nor any other planning issues.

Recommended Actions

Whilst the Parish Council is unable to dictate on intake policy, all efforts will be made to encourage the school to take local children first, and will communicate to the school and the appropriate authorities the wishes of the residents to limit the numbers of children attending the school.

5.2 Transport

The business community were invited to comment and raise issues on the need for alternative methods of transport, cycle paths, bus routes, traffic congestion, parking etc.

The business groupings as described above are subject to different transport and road conditions and requirements.

The village retail units have ongoing difficulties with the heavy traffic volumes along Whalley Road. As stated elsewhere in this document, there are no traffic management systems, nor pedestrian crossing facilities at the junction where these businesses are located. The village retail units have expressed their needs for the provision of both a traffic management system (yellow traffic box), and for a pedestrian crossing at the junction of Whalley Road and Fountains Avenue.

The farms and other small businesses (saw mill, garden centre etc) use Whins Lane and Trapp Lane as their primary means of access. Generally, there are few problems with traffic speeds and volumes. However heavy goods vehicles, including milk tankers, have difficulties passing along School Lane during school days to access Trapp Lane. The problems of access/egress via School Lane are shared by parents who transport their children to the school via private vehicles. The village school has expressed concerns regarding the lack of road crossings in the vicinity of the school. These views align with the wishes of the parish residents (see section 4.2.1 above).

Road transport for both workers and the movement of goods provides no problems for the businesses located along Blackburn Road. There is easy access to Burnley, Blackburn and to the M65 motorway. The disused railway line running from Great Harwood to Padiham and Rosegrove presents itself as a ready-made walkway and cycleway that could encourage reduced dependence on cars and promote a healthier lifestyle. Lancashire County Council proposes to extend the Greenway along Blackburn Road and Barrowford Road in order to provide access between the Greenway and Time Technology Park. This will enable more people to access their places of employment along Blackburn Road via bicycle or on foot.

Recommended Actions

1. The Parish Council will continue current negotiations with LCC Highways Authority (Environment Directorate), regarding the pressing need for a pedestrian crossing and/or traffic management system at the junction of Fountains Avenue and Whalley Road, and for a pedestrian crossing at the junction of Simonstone Lane and Whalley Road.

2. The Parish Council will work with the school's governing body and LCC Highways Authority in order to improve the traffic and parking issues on School Lane and close-by avenues.

5.3 Renewable Energy

There is a mixed response to the potential usage of renewable energy sources, with one business in favour of wind turbines and another against the idea; others are neutral.

With the exception of the potential installation of solar panels at one of the retail businesses, there are no current plans to deploy renewable sources.

Recommended Actions

In general, planning applications for the installation of wind turbines within the Simonstone parish boundary will not be supported by the Parish Council, unless there are specific local needs and/or considerations. The Parish Council will give special consideration in those cases where renewable energy sources are required to reduce direct business costs or pollution.

5.4 Services

5.4.1 Public Transport

No comments have been received from the parish-located businesses regarding public transport. With the exception of the requirement to extend the Padiham Greenway extension it is assumed therefore that there is general satisfaction with the service within the business community.

The school reports that over 70% of its pupils are transported to school via private vehicles whilst also reporting that 'it is poorly serviced by appropriate public transport'.

Recommended Actions

The Parish Council will work with the school's governing body in order to introduce greater use of appropriate public transport by the school's pupils.

5.4.2 Telecommunications

Within the business community the local telecommunications services appear to be satisfactory. Whilst no specific problems have been communicated wishes were expressed for both improvement in coverage of mobile services, and improvement in transmission speeds of broadband services. This latter problem will be remedied under BT's published programme for service enhancements to local broadband speeds in 2014.

Recommended Actions

BT's 'high speed broadband' rollout programme for Ribble Valley will be monitored, and if required the needs of Simonstone residents and businesses will be pursued with Lancashire County Council's 'Broadband Programme Manager'.

5.4.3 Police

Crimes committed in Simonstone parish have been increasing in numbers over the last three years. Whilst anti-social behaviour has been the most common of the crimes burglary, which is probably of most concern to the businesses of the parish, also figures highly.

The responses to the questionnaire from the businesses express a need for a greater police presence, particularly during the hours of darkness.

Recommended Actions

The specific comments provided on police matters will be forwarded to the Police Crime Commissioner for his attention.

5.4.4 Environmental

Only one environmental issue was raised in response to the business questionnaire this being recycling. The closure of the Padiham recycling site has affected businesses as well as households.

The village retail outlets are in need of local recycling facilities eg recycling bins. Seaways Services is a specialised business and is in need of access to a local glass recycling facility.

Recommended Actions

The needs for local recycling bins will be brought to the attention of the District Authority

Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1 - Summary Results from Questionnaires

6.1.1 Responses to Residential Questionnaire

1. Housing (questions 1 & 2)

A large majority (73%) of the residents said that they do not wish to see the character of the village changed by the construction of more houses in Simonstone. However, in the event that additional houses were to be constructed it is deemed that sheltered housing is the type most in need, with lesser demand for affordable housing and large family houses.

2. Pedestrians and Cyclists

2.1 Pedestrian Road Crossings (question 3A, 3B): The residents of Simonstone are almost unanimous (86%) in their demand for pedestrian crossings on Whalley Road. Two locations are identified as focal points: the junction of Fountains Avenue and Whalley Road, and the junction of Simonstone Lane and Whalley Road. Both of these crossing points are heavily used by school children.

2.2 Cycle Path (question 9): Although some were unaware of the Padiham Greeway, of those responding a large number (75%) are in favour of extending the cycle/walkway through Simonstone.

2.3 Footpaths (question 20): Footpath maintenance is found to be acceptable to approximately half of respondents, whereas approximately half have concerns regarding such issues as dog faeces, litter, and pot holes etc.

3. Traffic and Highways

3.1 Whalley Road (questions 5,6): The volumes of vehicles using Whalley Road on a daily basis is considered to be excessive and increasing (79% expressed this opinion). Although traffic speeds on the road is not considered to be a major problem, the excessive volumes result in congestion, delays and risks in exiting side roads, and risks to pedestrians crossing Whalley Road. There is a renewed call for the provision of a bypass road, and for the provision of a 'cycle friendly' route.

3.2 Back Lane, Trapp Lane, Whins Lane (question 4): The speed limits currently in force on Back Lane, Trapp Lane, and Whins Lane are not considered to be an issue for the majority (66%) of residents. However, it is recognised that this may not be the case for those using those roads on a regular/frequent basis, and it is proposed that the speed limit on Whins Lane is reduced.

3.3 Parking (question 8A): Although only a minority of residents (40%) report problems with parking and road access, the question has generated a significant number of comments. Much of the road access problem is associated with Whalley Road traffic volumes described in 3.1 above.

The parking problems are associated with a few specific locations. Fountains Avenue suffers from vans and lorries, which are presumably delivery vehicles, parking near the junction with Whalley Road, and also from vehicles associated with business at the garage. Many comments are associated with parking around the school, with overspill onto the avenues and lanes around the school.

4. Amenities & Facilities

4.1 Grit Bins (question 7): The majority of residents are of the opinion that there are sufficient grit bins in situ. However, it is recognised that this is a very local issue and there is a call for additional units to be installed on the Fountains Avenue estate and on Woodside Road.

4.2 Litter Bins (question 21): A relatively small majority are of the opinion that there are sufficient litter bins in Simonstone: 53% share this opinion and 42% think there are insufficient.

4.3 Dog Waste Bins (question 22): Approximately half of respondents are satisfied that there are sufficient bins in the village. Approximately half expressed concerns about such issues as the failure of dog owners to ensure that the bins are used, that there are too many dogs in the village, and that there are insufficient numbers of bins.

4.4 Wind Turbines (question 11, 12): The response to the questions on wind turbines is slightly confusing. Whereas a majority of 61% were against the installation of wind turbines in Simonstone, 69% stated that wind turbines of any height are unacceptable. However, it is clear that the residents are against their deployment locally.

4.5 Shops (question 13): General consensus (73%) is that no more shops are needed in the village. Fruit and vegetables came top of the list of products in demand if another shop was to be opened.

4.6 Youth Facilities (question 14,15,16): The majority of residents responding are in favour of youth activities, focussing on a youth group (81%) that caters for the ages of 10 to 16 years. The types of activities requested is many and varied with no particular activity identified as a specific need.

4.7 Village Hall (question 19): There is no great demand for a village hall; 67% were against the idea.

5. Services

5.1 Local Bus Service (question 8B): The bus service is considered adequate (86%). The question raised very few comments.

5.2 Broadband Service (question 10): The majority (54%) considered the existing service(s) to be unsatisfactory. The question raised very few comments.

5.3 Local Police Service (question 18): The current level of policing appears to be about right, with almost half of residents (47%) stating that they are happy with the status quo. The most favoured comment is 'for an improved visible presence'.

5. School (question 17)

An overwhelming majority are against any enlargement of the village school. Only 8% are in favour of enlargement. The main reasons expressed for the antipathy are the associated traffic and parking issues, and that the school attracts many pupils from outside the immediate neighbourhood of Read and Simonstone.

Percentage summaries of the answers to the questions obtained from the completed questionnaires

(distributed and collated by Simonstone Parish Council, March 2013)

No	Question	Yes %	No %	Do not Know %	No Comment Not applicable %	Remarks/ comments
1	Is there need for additional housing in Simonstone?	27.2	72.7			
2	If there had to be additional housing in Simonstone?	Affordable	Sheltered	Large family	Social	None of these
		27.7	36.1	29.1	4.1	2.7
3a	Are there sufficient pedestrian road crossings in Simonstone?	14.7	86.4	0.7		
3b	Where do you feel that pedestrian road crossings are most needed	Simonstone/ Whalley Rd	Stork/ Fountain	Other	Do not know	List of other crossings attached to Question 3
		42.7	53.0	3.6	0.6	
4	Are the speed limits on lanes such as Back Lane, Trapp Land and Whins Lane an issue for you?	33.3	65.8	0.7		
5	Do you find traffic density a problem on Whalley Road?	79.2	20.7			
6	Do you find traffic speed a problem on Whalley Road?	50.8	49.1			
7	Are there sufficient provisions of grit bins?	58.8	39.2	1.9		
8a	Do you experience parking/road	40.3	57.1		2.4	

	access problems in the village/your road							
No	Question	Yes %	No %	Do not Know %	No Comment Not applicable %	Remarks/ comments		
8b	Do you feel the bus services adequate?	85.8	7.4	5.9	0.7			
9	Would you be in in favour of the Padiham Greenway Cycle Path being extended through Simonstone?	75.4	23.6	0.9				
10	How satisfied are you with the speed of your broadband internet in Simonstone?	Not at all satisfied	Dis-satisfied	Not Interested	Satisfied	No comment		
		25	29	8	37	1		
11	What is your attitude to wind turbines within the bounds of Simonstone	Very much against	Against	Not interested	In favour	Very much in favour		
		43.7	17.5	17.5	15.3	5.8		
12	How tall would be an acceptable height for a wind turbine?	None acceptable	20 yds/mtrs	40 yds/mtrs	60 yds/mtrs	No comment	Do not know	Depends on location
		68.9	14.2	8.4	4.2	1.6	1.6	0.8
13	Would you like more shops in the locality	25.3	73.9	1.5			For a list of suggestions see question 13	
14	Is there a need for more facilities for you activities? If yes what type of facilities	72.4	13.7	11.9	1.8		For a list of suggestions see question 14 and 15	
15	Is there a need for a Youth Group in the locality	80.5	13.8	4.16	1.3			

16	If yes for which age ranges	10 to 16	16-20	3.4	1.8	
		75.9	18.5			
17	Is it necessary to enlarge Simonstone Primary School?	8.4	72.2	15.9	2.5	What are the intakes?
						0.8
No	Question	Yes %	No %	Do not Know %	No Comment Not applicable %	Remarks/ comments
18	Are you happy with the level of Policing in the Village?	46.7	57.0	2.1		
19	Is there a need for a New Village Hall	29.1	66.9	3.1	Use the cricket club	
					0.7	
20	Are footpaths sufficiently maintained in the locality?	46.7	51.8	1.4		
21	Is there sufficient provision of litter bins?	53.2	41.9	3.2		
22	Is there sufficient provision of dog waste bins?	48.4	49.2	2.3		

6.1. 2 Business Responses

Summary of Responses

The following comments were received from the responding companies. The names of the specific companies associated with each response have been omitted in order to maintain anonymity, however these are available if required.

Question No	Topic	Response
1	Future Plans: Growth of your Business, plans for expansion, employment of more staff.	No expansion in operation or staffing planned. No plans for expansion or more staff Outdoor Elements: Business growing fast and expected to continue. Forecast expansion in operations, operational hours, and staff from 25 to 30 Our Plans are to grow the business on the current site.
2	Transport: Need for alternative method of transport, Cycle paths, bus routes, traffic congestion. Parking	A form of crossing on Whalley Road eg zebra crossing Congestion can be bad on Whalley Road, but is the main route from M65 to Whalley, Clitheroe etc. Pedestrian crossing near Stork/Spar. We don't have transport needs. No comment No transport needs No real problems encountered.
3	Telecommunication: Speed of broadband.	Upgrade of broadband speed Only use mobile services. Mobile network coverage needs improvement. Satisfactory Don't use broadband No problems with broadband No real problems
4	Crime:	Uniform, marked vehicle, greater presence at later times

	Police presence	<p>We have had some issues but Police have been helpful.</p> <p>Needs more police presence after dark.</p> <p>The village needs a fulltime dedicated Police officer.</p> <p>Crime problems tend to be worse in winter when days are darker and shorter. Police response variable, sometimes immediate and sometimes takes 2 days to follow up.</p> <p>Can't comment</p> <p>Police presence can always be improved</p>
5	Employment needs	<p>No problems with recruitment</p> <p>N/A</p>
6	Environmental: Litter, flooding, reducing waste and promoting recycling.	<p>Village is well cared for.</p> <p>Could do with Recycling Centre like Tesco or other big supermarkets have.</p> <p>Why do businesses not receive recycling bins?</p> <p>Need a local company to deal with glass recycling.</p> <p>Closure of Padiham Recycling has caused great inconvenience.</p> <p>No real problems</p>
7	Renewable energy.	<p>Solar panels to be installed.</p> <p>No wind farms</p> <p>No comment</p> <p>Would not oppose any wind farms or hydro electric power stations. Maybe could look at a windmill or solar powered energy.</p> <p>N/A</p>
8	Planning.	<p>Business rates are very high and put pressure on cash flow and business.</p> <p>Would like to see Workhouse Farm sold and given a new lease of life. Maybe make it into nice looking affordable housing for local families.</p> <p>Support local businesses</p>

		N/A
9	How can Simonstone Parish Council help your business ?	Great place to work and have a business. The PC has not been any help up to now, in fact quite the opposite.
10	Any other suggestions or issues, would you wish to advise	A yellow painted box at the site of the petrol station would allow traffic to enter/exit site better. Speed of traffic through Simonstone is far too fast. Let us know how we can help further eg village fairs, fetes etc

Action Plan

Action Plan

Issue	Relevant Agencies	Timescale	Action	Outcome
Housing	RVBC Planning Authority	2013/14	<p>1. To retain the current 'village' appearance, and to improve the availability of housing capable of meeting local needs. The responses regarding housing requirements and preferences will be provided to the District Planning Authority with a request that this information is included in the next update of the District Plan. Particularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is no desire for any large scale housing development. • given the response and the age profile of the Simonstone population there is evidential demand for sheltered housing • the introduction and transfer to sheltered housing will subsequently make available some of the existing larger properties 	<p>Influence the 'District Plan'</p> <p>Monitor planning applications</p>
Housing	Appropriate Housing Association	When the opportunity arises	<p>2. To retain the current 'village' appearance, and to improve the availability of housing capable of meeting local needs. If and when an appropriate property or location becomes available, and the District Planning Authority has made no intention to develop sheltered housing within Simonstone, then an appropriate housing association will be requested to propose the development of sheltered housing at that property or location.</p>	<p>Direct action to develop sheltered housing.</p>

Pedestrians & Cyclists	LCC Environment Directorate (Highways Department)	Ongoing	3. To improve road safety and healthy lifestyles for parish pedestrians. Continue current dialogue with LCC Highways Authority regarding the pressing need for a pedestrian crossing and/or traffic management system at the junction of Fountains Avenue and Whalley Road, and for a pedestrian crossing at the junction of Simonstone Lane and Whalley Road.	
Pedestrians & Cyclists	LCC Environment Directorate and Parish Councils of Simonstone, Read, Padiham, & Gt Harwood		4. To improve healthy lifestyles and reduce road traffic. To work with other interested parish councils to achieve the reopening of the footpath that follows the disused railway track along the 800 metre length between Dunkirk Farm Lane and the Martholme viaduct, and to have the complete footpath from Great Harwood to Padiham Greenway included in the definitive map.	
Pedestrians & Cyclists	LCC Environment Directorate and Parish Councils of Simonstone, Read, Padiham, & Gt Harwood		5. To improve healthy lifestyles and reduce road traffic. The Parish Council is in support of the LCC planning application for the extension of the Padiham Greenway along Blackburn Road and Barrowford Road in order to provide access between the Greenway and Time Technology Park.	

Traffic & Transport	LCC Transport Planning Group		6. To reduce road traffic through the centres of Read and Simonstone, and thereby improve safety and lifestyles, and the efficiency of a major route into and out of Ribble Valley. To seek out and pursue possible avenues for the development of the 'shelved' bypass road. In particular to strive for inclusion of the development in the LCC Local Transport Plan on the basis that the A671 is one of only two main routes into/out of the Ribble Valley.	
Traffic & Transport	LCC Environment Directorate (Highways Department)		7. To improve road safety. Continue current dialogue with the LCC Highways Authority for a solution to the bottlenecks at the junctions of School Lane and Clough Lane with Whalley Road.	
Traffic & Transport	LCC Environment Directorate (Highways Department)		8. To improve road safety. Continue current dialogue with the LCC Highways Authority and the Police for: a) a reduction of the speed limits in force along Trapp Lane and Whins Lane b) a suitable 'traffic management' system for the Whins Lane and Trapp Lane junction. c) retention of police speed checks on Whalley Road and Simonstone Lane. The parish council will maintain the deployment of SPID's.	
Traffic & Transport	LCC Environment Directorate (Highways Department) And School Governing Body		9. To improve road safety and the quality of life and well-being of residents. Continue current dialogue with the LCC Highways Authority and with the school's governing body for resolutions to the issues concerning traffic and parking on School Lane and local avenues.	

<p>Amenities & Facilities: Grit bins, litter bins, and dog waste bins</p>	<p>LCC Environment Directorate (Highways Department) and Ribble Valley Borough Council</p>		<p>10. To improve road safety, health, and the general appearance of the parish.</p> <p>Each specific requirement for the above facilities will be considered annually by the Parish Council. Where there is a demonstrable need the requirement will be brought to the attention of the relevant authority. In those instances where the authority refuses to provide the required facility the Parish Council may consider funding its provision and maintenance from the Parish Precept.</p>	
<p>Amenities & Facilities: Renewable Energy (including Wind Turbines)</p>	<p>Ribble Valley Borough Council Planning Dept</p>		<p>11. To retain the general appearance of the parish, whilst supporting local businesses.</p> <p>Planning applications for the installation of wind turbines within the Simonstone parish boundary will not be supported by the Parish Council unless there are specific local needs and/or considerations. The Parish Council will give special consideration in those cases where renewable energy sources are required to reduce direct business costs or pollution.</p>	
<p>Amenities & Facilities: Shops</p>	<p>Village Store (Spar shop)</p>		<p>12. To ensure the sustainability of the local retail outlet and reduce the need for residents to travel beyond the village.</p> <p>The products identified as not being currently available, but being desirable, from the village store will be brought to the attention of the store owner/manager.</p>	

<p>Amenities & Facilities: Youth Facilities</p>	<p>Youth Council</p>		<p>13. To pursue the needs and provision of facilities for the youth of the parishes of Simonstone and Read. The parish council will work in cooperation with our colleagues of Read Parish Council in order to support the pursuit of realistic and viable projects as proposed by the Read & Simonstone local Youth Council. Of current consideration are a) all-weather sports area b) skate park</p>	
<p>Amenities & Facilities: Village Hall</p>			<p>No action planned.</p>	

Services: Telecommunications	LCC & BT		14. To improve the broadband services available to the residents and businesses of the parish. BT's current rollout programme of 'high speed broadband' services for Ribble Valley will be monitored, and if required the needs of Simonstone will be pursued with LCC's Programme Manager and/or BT.	
Services: Public Transport	Local Bus Companies, LCC, & School Governing Body		15. To reduce local traffic volumes, and pollution levels. To develop greater usage of appropriate public transport by the school's pupils.	
Services: Police	Police Crime Commissioner		16. To reduce local crime by improving the visibility and involvement of police. The specific comments provided on police matters will be forwarded to the Police Crime Commissioner for his/her attention.	

Environmental	Ribble Valley Borough Council		17. To improve local recycling facilities for village businesses. The needs for local recycling facilities (bins?) at the village retail outlets will be brought to the attention of the District Authority.	
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School	School Governing Body And LCC Education Authority		<p>18. To ensure that the school meets the needs of the local community.</p> <p>Whilst the Parish Council is unable to dictate on intake policy, all efforts will be made to encourage the school to take local children first, and will communicate to the school and the appropriate authorities the wishes of the residents to limit the numbers of children attending the school.</p>	
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Parish Garden and Flower Displays	Grant Funding bodies		<p>19. To improve the visual amenity of the parish. Within the constraints of the parish precept and any other overriding constraints the parish council will consider specific requests for the development of the parish garden and the provision of flower displays at preferred locations within the parish.</p>	
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