

BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT TO THE MEETING OF SIMONSTONE PARISH COUNCIL ON 8TH FEBRUARY 2024

Our fourth and fifth Councillor Drop-in sessions were held on 25 November and 27 January in Simonstone and Read respectively. I would like to apologise to the residents who came to meet Gaye and I here in November on a particularly cold morning. I had forgotten that I had been provided with a key for the Hall which I left at home meaning that we all had an al-fresco drop-in session! I have displayed an updated notice outside this Hall confirming our next Drop-in Session dates and venues for the next three months in 2024.

My latest reports to LCC Highways include more recurrent potholes on School Lane which are ongoing. There is a clear need for wholesale resurfacing of School Lane which I will continue to press LCC Highways for. I have also reported multiple potholes near the top of Haugh Avenue.

The lack of a grit bin that I reported at the junction of Fountains Avenue with Whalley Road is not going to be acted on by LCC Highways at this time which is very disappointing. The faded white 'H' line markings across residential driveways on School Lane that I reported have been inspected by LCC Highways and they have confirmed that works have been programmed to all but one of those requested (outside Rockwood). Gaye is looking into a complaint of deep potholes and flooding of the track to the rear of Buckshaw Terrace.

The Liberal Democrat Group on Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) split in November resulting in a reshuffle of Committee allocations over which Gaye and I have no control, other than swapping between us Committees allocated to our Green Group to level up workload. Gaye is now on Accounts and Audit (unchanged), Economic Development (unchanged) and Parish Council Liaison (swapped with me) and I am on Community Services (unchanged), Licensing (unchanged) and Planning and Development (new). Gaye was taken off the Policy and Finance Committee. Gaye remains on the Climate Working Group as its parent Committee is Economic Development.

As previously reported, the community road safety signs donated to us by the former Safe Lanes in Pendleside Group are stored at Read and Simonstone Village Hall. I hope that the Parish Council can now look for suitable locations for these signs on private land along Simonstone's rural lanes and seek consent to put them up in key locations from the landowners. It is a real boost that we already have support in principle from the Huntroyde Estate that owns a large number of the tenanted farms with borders on lanes and rural roads. I wondered if the Parish could consider

employing its Lengthsman to put some of these signs up if Parish funds permit?

I have arranged a follow-up meeting with Steve Maggs, RVBC Enforcement Officer on 16th February to discuss further the locking of the gate in the boundary fence to the rear of the Time Tech Business Park that severs the continuity of the cycleway through the Business Park to the path along the disused railway line forming part of the Martholme Greenway. I will provide a further update in my next report.

The Coal Authority has concluded its response to my correspondence with it on the milky white discharge from an outfall pipe in the field north of the River Calder accessed off Altham Bridge. Ribble Valley Borough Council's Environmental Health Team says that this discharge does not fall within its area of responsibility and therefore that it will not test or monitor it. The Coal Authority has released its historic sampling, test and analysis results to me and has stated that any potential public hazard presented by the physical features of the outfall pipe, channel and lagoon is the responsibility of the private landowner, not the Authority to investigate and rectify. I have left the Coal Authority on notice that I think it should continue to test and monitor the discharge going forward and that a potential hazard exists to users of the nearby public footpath who are at risk of tripping or falling into the ditch into which the outfall pipe discharges. The Authority has undertaken to pass on my concerns to the landowner.

I am currently dealing with a complaint that I received about excessive vehicular road noise resulting from the laying or renewal of red rumble strips on the approach to Altham Bridge on Blackburn Road. I have been working with County Councillor Mirfin on this issue with LCC Highways and RVBC's Environmental Health Team. In my opinion, this type of traffic calming is totally unsuitable for use so close to residential properties, particularly as I am unaware of any prior consultation taking place. I will continue to pursue this matter along with County Councillor Mirfin.

I am aware that a local donor wishes to investigate the feasibility of providing funds for specific road safety improvements which Lancashire County Council Highways Authority is currently unable or unwilling to fund. I would like to request that the Parish Council considers the means by which an anonymous subscription would be acceptable and the willingness of the Parish Council to use its wide-ranging powers to act in the public interest in co-operation with the Highways Authority to improve road safety within the Parish.

Councillor Malcolm Peplow

4th February 2024