

Simonstone Parish Council

Chairman; - Coun. Geoff Hodbod

Clerk I Roger Hirst, 24 Ennerdale Road, Clitheroe BB7 2PB.

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20/11/12

**Mr Marshal Scott
Chief Executive
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
BB7 2DD**



Dear Sir

Planning applications 3/2012/0909 erection of a Managers Dwelling

3/2012/0910 Heywood Caravan Park Dunkirk Farm Whalley Road Read Lancashire BB12 7RR

Change of use of land for the siting of 15 new static holiday caravans in place of the storage which will be relocated.

The Parish Council has discussed the above applications and has concluded that permission for both the developments should be withheld until the footpath along the former railway line is reopened and that approval should be subject to a 106 agreement.

The footpath along the former Railway line was used by local people for many years prior to the 2001 Outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease when access to it was denied. Numerous representations to the County Council from Read Parish Council, Simonstone Parish Council and other organisations have failed to obtain the consent of the Land owner to reopen access to it.

The redundant railway line was protected in the former Burnley district wide plan as a suitable route for the Read and Simonstone Bypass which achieved the status of **fifth** in the county's priority of major road development programme before the change of government in 1997 when the plan was dropped. Following this the track was identified as a part of the National Cycleway Route. Sustrans and the County Council produced a Plan for construction of the Cycleway from Padiham to Great Harwood and it was due to be completed during year 2008-09. The Parish Council was told that there were problems with the route but an alternative route would be developed if the access to the Martholme viaduct was not found. The Parish Council was then advised that the landowner had raised objections to the re-opening of the former railway preventing the completion of the funded scheme.

Hence the Parish Council request for a 106 Agreement to ensure that this part of the national Cycleway be completed which will enhance the quality of cycling and walking by completing this long distance route. At present the partly finished Cycleway has failed to

meet its objective to be a facility for residents, tourists and the five local businesses for safer travel for their employees.

It will be noted that this has been an important route has been recognised as an important east to west Lancashire since the Railway was built in 1847 and, more recently, by Burnley District Council, Lancashire County Council and, additionally, Ribble Valley Districtwide Plan policy (T5).

Unfortunately, despite the objection raised by the Parish Council, Policy T5 which protected the track in the Ribble Valley Districtwide Plan has been dropped and the Core Strategy is now in the final stages of being developed and approved.

However, despite the above history and the topography of the area this area is important for access to the main routes to the South A666 East Burnley and West M55 and main motorways to the West. It is the easiest route for the construction of a Cycleway/ Highway between the Hyndburn and Burnley built up areas offering a highway route down the border of the (2 district)?. The route enters the Ribble Valley at the junction of Blackburn Road/ Padiham bypass along the railway line towards Martholme, where the cycleway would cross Martholme Viaduct to join the Great Harwood Cycleway.

The Parish Council has agreed that the Padiham to Simonstone section of the Cycleway should be completed up to Simonstone Lane. This link would provide a safe route for employees (which is much needed following the accidents to 2 of the British Gold medal Olympians) to cycle to work in the major local industrial estates. It would provide a sustainable, carbon friendly, green route for them to use and assist employers in developing their Travel to Work Strategy which they are obliged to provide for any new development they wish to seek planning permission for.

The Core Strategy has identified the southern area Whalley Barrow and Clitheroe as the major development areas of Ribble Valley and it is only a matter of time that a route to the South must be developed. This route, avoiding the main settlements of Read and Simonstone, will be recognised as a major contribution towards meeting the economic development of the industrial areas who employ Ribble Valley residents.

Simonstone Parish Council requests that the above planning applications should be subjected to a section 106 Agreement to secure access to the Cycleway Route as proposed on the NATIONAL CYCLEWAY ROUTE in addition to enabling the reopening of the footpath along the track and their development at the earliest opportunity.

Wishing you every success

Yours faithfully

I R Hirst

Clerk to the Parish Council