

WRIGHTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

At the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of the Parish of Wrightington held on Monday 23rd September 2019 at Mossy Lea Village Hall at 6.00pm the following were present:

Councillors: Mrs J Burton (Acting Chairman), Mr F Johnson, Mrs K Jukes, Mrs R Critchley and Mr House. Also present were 4 members of the public.

1. **APOLOGIES** - Were received and accepted from Councillor Mr Hodgkinson (unwell)
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – Members were asked to consider any personal/prejudicial interest they may have to disclose in relation to matters under discussion at the Meeting – **No declarations were made at this point in the Meeting however, should a Councillor feel he/she has any interest in later matters he/she will declare it at that point.**
3. **TO APPROVE EXPENDITURE ON MEDIATION** - The Chairman explained that Councillors were present tonight to discuss expenditure on mediation. Councillors had received background information on this issue. The Clerk explained that West Lancs. BC has suggested that Mediation could provide a local resolution to the current issues involving the 2 parties. The Parish Council need to consider paying for this. For information, Councillor Mrs Burton reported that there had also been complaints submitted against herself and Clerk. The Clerk reported that West Lancs. BC provided contact details for 2 mediators, one dealing with mediation in the workplace, the cost of which would start at £400 + Vat for 4 hours and £120 per hour thereafter. Another mediator who is familiar with local government legislation and codes of conduct would make an initial charge of £700 + Vat plus a subsequent hourly rate thereafter. Councillors felt it was difficult to vote to spend public money without knowing all the facts and how this situation has arisen. It was clarified that 1 allegation against 2 Councillors and Clerk had been discussed and dismissed with no further action as there had been no breach of the code of conduct by the Parish Councillors involved. The remaining 2 allegations are against one Parish Councillor. Councillors asked whether mediation would resolve this and if it not, will the Parish Council be liable for further costs. At this stage no decision has been made as to whether the allegations are correct or incorrect, or whether the response to the allegations is correct or incorrect. West Lancs. BC is suggesting that finding a local resolution by means of Mediation is the most appropriate solution. It comes down to the Parish Council to arrange and pay for the mediation. It is not too late at this stage for the parties involved to try to reach an agreement on the way forward before or without going to mediation. It is felt that this is a rather open ended situation for the Parish Council if the situation is not resolved with Mediation. If the Parish Council choose not to pay for Mediation it is assumed that the Parish Council will refer this back to the Borough Council who may possibly find or use another means of local resolution. Councillor Mrs Burton proposed that the Parish Council do not use public money to pay for mediation because they have insufficient information to base their decision on and they do not know if mediation will resolve the situation which means this could be an open-ended matter for the Parish Council. The proposal was seconded and on a majority vote it was **Resolved: That the Parish Council will not spend public money on mediation because they have insufficient information to base their decision on and, they do not know if mediation will resolve the situation which means this could be an open-ended matter for the Parish Council.** The Clerk will report this back to West Lancs. BC.
4. **DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING** Monday 21st October 2019
Mossy Lea Village Hall

Meeting Closed: 6.16pm