

# WRIGHTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

## ANNUAL PARISH REPORT 2017

### 1. PARISH COUNCIL Chairman and Vice-Chairman

At the Meeting of the Council held on 16 May 2016 Councillor Mrs J Burton was elected as Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2016/2017, and Councillor Mr F Hodgkinson was elected Vice-Chairman.

### 2. PARISH COUNCILLORS

At May 2016 Wrightington Parish Councillors were:-

#### APPLEY BRIDGE

Mr J Clinch	16 Clifton Crescent, Wigan.
Mr C House	77 Runshaw Avenue, Appley Bridge, Wigan

#### MOSSY LEA

Mrs Judith Burton	2 Courage Low Lane, Wrightington.
Mr Frank Hodgkinson	Acrefield House, 17A Broadhurst Lane, Wrightington.
Mr F Johnson	351 Mossy Lea Road, Wrightington.
Mr P Gartside	2 Chisnall Avenue, Wrightington.

The Parish Council is now made up of 6 Parish Councillors and 2 vacancies. The Clerk has attended a number of Liaison Meetings with West Lancashire Borough Council Officers and other Clerk's to assist with various issues arising during the course of the year and also attended the LCC Parish & Town Council Conference. Councillors have attended briefing sessions, Councillors Code of Conduct Training, open days, public consultations and site meetings to address issues which arise in the Parish as required. 5 out of the 6 Parish Councillors now receive information, documents, agendas and minutes electronically. The Chairman was again nominated to attend the Buckingham Palace Garden Party. Councillor Clinch, the Parish Council representative on the Peter Lathom Charity, reported that the money allocated for Wrightington this year would again be divided equally between Appley Bridge and Mossy Lea Pensioners Groups. The Parish Council and Councillors continued to work throughout the year with Borough Councillor Mrs Baybutt, Borough Councillor Mrs Evans and County Councillor Fillis.

### 3. FINANCE & PROCEDURE

All advisory, informative and procedural documentation used by the Parish Council was reviewed, amended and approved as required during the course of the year and formally adopted at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council. Following a detailed Budget Meeting where the Parish Council was again faced with cuts in the concurrent contributions and the council tax support grants from West Lancs. BC, the Parish Council, being reluctant to increase the Parish Precept agreed that some projects may have to be put on hold if outside funding cannot be sourced. However, following detailed discussions on this subject the Parish Council agreed that it was necessary to increase the Precept to supplement these cut backs. The Parish requirement for 2016/17 was agreed as £15,000.00 and therefore a Precept of £14,388.00 was requested from West Lancs. Borough Council. Concurrent Contributions of £2980.00 and a top up grant of £612.00 were also received. Changes in the way the Parish Council Finances are handled, implemented in 2003, continue to ensure that financial matters function efficiently and effectively. The Parish Council accounts for the year ending 31 March 2016 were audited by BDO, with no matters arising. The Parish Council notified the Clerk that the NEST (National Employment Savings Trust) Pension Scheme would be put in place if she wished to be enrolled on a pension scheme. The Clerk chose not to enrol in a pension scheme and therefore the Parish Council are not required to put one in place at the moment. The Council has taken all the action necessary throughout the course of the year to satisfy audit requirements prior to the submission of the end of year financial report to the external auditors and, following notification of changes, accepted that new Audit Arrangements will be in place from

2017. The Councils Financial Statement for the year ending 31 March 2017 will be approved at the May Parish Council Meeting.

#### **4. PLANNING**

The Parish Council is notified of all planning applications within the Parish and is able to submit comments, observations and objections when necessary. The Parish Council however, has no power of direction or decision making in these matters.

43 Planning Applications have been dealt with by the Parish Council during the year. (In comparison to 47 applications last year.)

There were few, if any, controversial planning application discussed this year with most being for standard house extensions.

The Borough Council do not have to notify neighbours when a planning application is submitted to them, therefore in cases where adjoining occupiers, or others affected by applications, become aware of proposed developments it is always advisable to submit observations and objections directly. Parish Councillors and members of the public can access all planning applications by logging onto the West Lancashire Borough Council website. By inputting the planning application number, address of the property or type of planning application and approximate location or date, the application details, maps, plans and associated documents can be viewed and comments, objections and observations submitted online.

#### **5. PARISH COUNCIL ACTIVITY**

The Parish Council is the first tier in the democratic structure of Local Government. The Council can also act as a pressure group putting forward the views of residents on topics affecting the area. The following are some of the areas in which Wrightington Parish Council have been involved during the past year:

The Parish Council once again produced their Annual Newsletter distribution being undertaken by Councillors, the Clerk, Borough Councillors and other volunteers in the Parish. The Council would like to thank all those who volunteered for their assistance with delivery and hope that they can rely on their support again this year.

The Chairman attended the Collation and Induction of the Rev. Sue Timmins at All Saints Appley Bridge & Christ Church Parbold on Sunday 13 November 2016.

The Parish Council has made Donations during the course of the year including Appley Bridge Pensioners Social Club, Wrightington Pensioners' Welfare Association, Revitalise and North West Air Ambulance.

The Parish Council began raising funds for the provision of 3 additional defibrillators in the Parish, 2 in the Mossy Lea Ward and 1 in the Appley Bridge Ward. Councillor House completed a sponsored Marathon run whilst Councillor Mrs Burton arranged a number of prize-winning games and raffles and approached local businesses that were all very willing to help with fundraising. The Parish Council also took the decision to relocate the existing defibrillators inside Mossy Lea and Appley Bridge Village Halls, outside the halls. This would result in the residents of Wrightington having public access to 5 defibrillators in key-coded boxes. It was later discovered that the promise of a defibrillator to be located at Dangerous Corner had not been fulfilled. The Clerk applied to the County Councillor for assistance in funding towards the purchase of a defibrillator and a box for this location. This request resulted in a full grant being awarded for the purchase of a defibrillator and box which will be erected outside Pesto at Dangerous Corner in due course.

During the course of the year the Parish Council website has been updated to give more information about the Parish and what goes on there. Also, Councillor House has taken over administration of the Parish Council Facebook page. It is hoped that both these forms of communication will prove useful for both residents in the Parish and visitors to our area.

Once it was determined that Lancashire Adult Learning could provide laptops and tablets for use at the computer classes in Mossy Lea Village Hall, the Parish Council made the decision to donate some of their computers to local schools and play groups. After consulting the 3 local primary schools in the Parish, 3 computers were donated to All Saints School at Appley Bridge and 3 were donated to Mossy Lea School with a further computer being given to Pingawings Preschool. All the recipients of the computers were delighted and the Parish Council were happy that they would be put to better use. A computer has now been set up by the Clerk permanently in the small office at Mossy Lea Village Hall. This will be available to village hall users during the coffee mornings and during their use of the village hall.

The Parish Council were informed by West Lancs. BC that, with effect from the 2017-18 financial year a charge will be made for homeowners who want to continue with a garden waste collection from their homes. It was reported that a similar charge is being brought in by Chorley Council. The Parish Council are concerned that an increase in fly-tipping of garden waste will be seen, particularly in secluded rural areas as a result.

Following information received from West Lancs. BC it was decided that the Parish Council would become involved in this year's Great British Litter Pick. West Lancs. Borough Council provided refuse sacks and loaned the Parish Council some litter pickers. Posters were put in the Notice Boards, in the village halls and details posted on the Parish Council website and Facebook page inviting volunteers to attend either of the village halls on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> March to collect litter pickers and bags. Volunteer numbers were extremely low, however, some litter picking was completed in the Mossy Lea Ward of the Parish by 2 volunteers and by Parish Councillor Johnson. The Clerk also informed the 3 primary schools in the Parish and suggested that they may wish to get involved by tidying up the school grounds with a litter pick. The Chairman recently visited Mossy Lea School and Pingawings Preschool who took part in litter picking their grounds, and presented them with a Certificate of Appreciation for their help with the Great British Litter Pick.

### **POLICING**

In September 2016 the Parish Council were informed that PCSO Dave Benson had left the Police Force after several years of being the PCSO for our area to join Network Rail, whilst PC Beverley Lodge retired from the Police force in late October. Following a few months break the Parish Council were informed that PCSO Andy Holderness had been appointed to cover our area and would be in post from 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

PCSO Holderness has been asked to assist with parking problems on Mossy Lea Road, near St Joseph's School, at school opening and closing times and with parking problems on Appley Lane North where double parking and obstruction of the footways has become an issue.

The Remembrance Sunday parade this year was more problematic than usual as the Police were reluctant to confirm that they could provide policing at the required times on Remembrance Sunday. Following a meeting with the Officer in charge of policing the numerous events on that date in West Lancashire, and some changes to his policing plans, the event went ahead with a road closure on the required section of Appley Lane North and, with the support of the Police. However, the Parish Council was informed that police provision may not be possible in future years and therefore the Parish Council will be reviewing this for 2017.

### **VILLAGE HALLS**

Fire detection and security at the village halls is monitored and checked annually and all electrical equipment has been PAT tested. Christmas Trees were again erected at both Village Halls and both Village Halls were again used in May for the Local Council elections.

The Parish Council successful Capital Bid to West Lancs. BC resulted in the provision of a metal fence at Appley Bridge Village Hall and the addition of planters on the fences at both village halls. The planters enhanced the visual appearance of the outside of both village halls and have proved a success. The Parish Council disposed of the old metal framed chairs from Appley Bridge Village

Hall and the bar tables in the attic at Mossy Lea Village Hall. A local football club benefitted from the chairs whilst a local public house in Appley Bridge took the tables.

#### APPLEY BRIDGE

At Appley Bridge Village Hall there is now a breakfast and after school club and Moo Music classes together with regular practice sessions by Old Hall Brass Band. These, along with regular use by the WI, the Pensioners Association, Karate and Jujitsu continue to make Appley Bridge Village Hall a vital part of community life in Wrightington. There have been a number of incidents of broken fluorescent light tubes and fittings at Appley Bridge Village Hall. The vertical blinds have also seen significant damage during the course of the year. The Parish Council understand that the damage has been caused by children playing ball games in the village hall during breakfast and after school club. The Council has now taken the reluctant decision to look into the cost of putting covers over the fluorescent tubes to prevent further damage in the future. Ball games are now prohibited inside the village hall. A number of constructive Village Hall Committee Meetings have taken place during the course of the year and issues arising have been dealt with in due course.

#### MOSSY LEA

At Mossy Lea Village Hall computer classes, watercolour painting classes and keep fit classes have all been delivered by Lancashire Adult Learning and it is hoped that these classes can continue and be expanded upon over the coming year. The craft class continues to thrive and Boot Camp, Metafit, Yoga, 2 embroidery classes, Moomusic and the Church of God are now all regular village hall users. The fundraising coffee mornings at the Village Hall are a significant part of village life now in Mossy Lea and, with the full support of the Parish Council, the Cancer Research UK Wrightington & Wigan Group of Friends have now raised over £70,000 for Cancer Research UK since they started in October 2010. The whole of the interior of Mossy Lea Village Hall has been painted and the floors deep cleaned. This has made a significant difference to the look of the inside of the hall and all the village hall users were delighted with the end result. The Parish Council has recently submitted a Capital Bid to paint the interior of Appley Bridge Village Hall and await a decision on whether the bid has been successful.

Village hall bookings have continued to increase at both village halls over the course of the year. Casual bookings for children's parties, hot-pot suppers, meetings and events mean that village hall use is increasing and the halls are becoming more self-sufficient.

The Parish Council would like to express its appreciation to the Voluntary Management Committees and the caretakers for all the work they do in maintaining the Village Halls.

#### **HIGHWAYS AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

A number of litter picks have been requested throughout the year at various locations including Mossy Lea Road, Moss Lane, Hall Lane, Crow Orchard Lane, Courage Low Lane, Toogood Lane and Broadhurst Lane.

The diversion of public footpath no.5, Boars Den, off Robin Hood Lane also raised issues as the applicant originally wanted to erect a very tall, closed boarded fence either side of the proposed new route. The Parish Council objected strongly to this as the pond in the land adjacent has always been a valuable amenity visually to footpath users. Following a Parish Council Meeting where the applicant was present and detailed discussions on the Parish Councils objections, the route was diverted with a 1 metre high picket style fence being erected so that footpath users could still take advantage of the view and amenity.

The Parish Council employed a contractor to cut back all the overgrowth and remove all the debris on the old road at the rear of the BP garage making this a safer usable route for pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders who need to negotiate the junction of Mossy Lea Road/Crow Orchard Road. Once cleared it became obvious that the holding tank at the rear of the BP garage is leaking and the foul smelling liquid is seeping onto this route. The Council contacted the Environmental Health officer at West Lancs. Borough Council who has visited the site on numerous occasions now and determined that the tank needs to be emptied more often. In the light of the planning permission

recently granted for an extension to the facilities provided at this site, the Parish Council will continue to monitor and report the seeping tank as necessary. The Clerk submitted a successful bid to VIP before it closed for £250 towards the cost of clearing this route.

The Parish Council continued to object to the obstruction of the lay-by on Hall Lane by the owners of 1 & 2 Coalgate Cottages who have erected builders fencing and placed large boulders and a very large planted stone trough at the front of the properties. The stone trough has finally been removed from the lay-by, however, the large boulders still remain an issue.

Stones on the grass verges on Robin Hood Lane, Highmoor Lane and Tunley Lane continue to obstruct the grass verge for emergency use by walkers, joggers, cyclists or horse-riders.

Parking problems remain a significant issue on Appley Lane North, Appley Bridge. Commuters who park all day and use the train are the main cause of the problems, however, these are made worse by motorists visiting the industrial units who park on the pavements causing an obstruction or double park on Appley Lane North compromising highway safety. The Police have increased their patrols during the year and some motorists have been issued with fixed penalties. Recently double yellow lines have been installed on stretches of the carriageway where parking is an issue thereby providing passing places for vehicles using this route.

Inconsiderate and potentially dangerous parking by parents dropping off and collecting their children from St Joseph's Primary School on Mossy Lea Road have been discussed on several occasions. The Parish Council requested yellow warning signs for outside school which seem to have helped and have asked the Police to increase patrols at school opening and closing times.

This year has also seen an increase in flooding and drainage issues in the Parish. Flooding on Mossy Lea Road, between Boundary Lane and Rookery Fold has been significant again and LCC recently did some investigations which confirmed that the drainage pipe is damaged in the field adjacent to the flooding location. The work is now planned but a date has not been given as the work required will need to be undertaken in conjunction with other utility providers as the damaged drain runs very close to a gas main. Flooding and drainage problems have also been an issue in the vicinity of Mossy Lea Village Hall where water run-off from the fields and inadequate drainage continues to cause flooding during heavy rainfall. Major flooding to homes on Courage Low Lane at Christmas and in March this year will hopefully now cease as investigations revealed that a new drain was required which has now been installed. Following several reports of the missing kerb edge gully top near Rigbye's Bridge, Mossy Lea Road, and serious flooding at this location as a result, LCC finally sent out an engineer to investigate. After initially being told that there was no stock of the type of gully top required, LCC officers discovered that the existing gully top had fallen into the gully and was causing the blockage which resulted in the road flooding at this location. Once the gully top was removed and put back in place, flooding ceased. Blocked gullies on Tunley Lane and Church Lane have also been reported during the course of the year.

Following several requests, and a very long wait, LCC erected a more substantial fence adjacent to the carriageway on Mill Lane.

There were again problems with the Ironman 2016 race. Mrs Burton met with representatives, but the event caused massive disruption in the Parish and a significant loss of revenue for local businesses whose busiest day is usually Sunday. Following the event, residents attended a Parish Council Meeting to give their views on the loss of business, the disruption and the chaos caused by the 2016 event. Access arrangements and promises made were not fulfilled, stewards were rude, argumentative and obstructive. Contestants were heard shouting abusive comments, using foul language and, were seen crossing the white centre line in the road, throwing litter and urinating in gardens, whilst spectators completely blocked some roads which were supposed to be open with their parked cars or by congregating in large groups. The Police were called to assist with some situations which arose during the day. The Parish Council contacted LCC as the highway authority who grant the road closures, West Lancs. Borough Council, the Police and Bolton Council, informing them all that they would be withdrawing their support for the event and objecting to the

route going through our Parish again in 2017. It is now obvious, as details for the 2017 event have been received, that the event cannot be stopped from going through our Parish. A public meeting has already taken place to outline the residents and Parish Council objections and concerns regarding the organisation of the 2017 event, and a further meeting is scheduled to take place where the event organisers will be presenting a Wrightington Plan which, it is hoped, will address the issues raised in previous years and will outline how the event will be run in the future to cause as little disruption as possible to the lives of the residents on the route and in the Parish.

The Parish Council has objected to the proposed stopping up of a section of highway on Broadhurst Lane and is now waiting for a site visit with an officer from LCC to discuss this in more detail.

This year saw West Lancs. Borough Council hand back responsibility for grass verge cutting in the Parish to Lancashire County Council. However, as some of the grass cuts undertaken by West Lancs. Borough Council contractors have been poor and inadequate, the Parish Council would hope to see an improvement by the contractors Lancashire County Council will employ to do this work.

Pot-holes in the parish are the subject of continual discussion at Parish Council Meetings whilst footway sweeping and gully emptying remain a major concern in the Parish. More attention is required as there is no continuity in either the road sweeping or gully emptying schedules.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Council has dealt with a considerable volume and variety of business during the past year including complaints from members of the public about various matters.

Any resident who requires help or advice on any problem affecting the area is welcome to bring it to the attention of the Parish Council either through a Parish Councillor, the Clerk to the Council or at Open Forum which is held at the beginning of each Parish Council Meeting.

Report from Mrs C A Cross  
The Clerk to the Council  
15 May 2017