

WRIGHTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH REPORT 2022

1. PARISH COUNCIL Chairman and Vice-Chairman

At the Meeting of the Council held on 17th May 2021 Councillor Mrs J Burton was elected as Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2021/2022, and Councillor Mr C House was elected Vice-Chairman.

2. PARISH COUNCILLORS

At May 2021 Wrightington Parish Councillors were:-

APPLEY BRIDGE

Mrs K Jukes 68 Appley Lane North, Appley Bridge.
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.

The Parish Council began the year with 5 members. At the start of the year there were 3 applicants for the 2 vacant Appley Bridge Ward Councillors posts, and 1 applicant for the 1 vacant Mossy Lea Ward Councillors post. During the course of the year Mr J Chambers, Mr R Alexander and Mr A Shaw were elected into the 2 vacant Appley Bridge Ward Councillors posts and the 1 Mossy Lea Ward Councillors posts respectively. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Clerk have attended a number of training events throughout the year. The May 2021 Borough Council elections saw Parish Councillor Jukes elected as the Borough Councillor for Wrightington and Appley Bridge. The Parish Council and Councillors continued to work throughout the year with Borough Councillor Mrs Baybutt, Borough Councillor Mrs Jukes and County Councillor Fillis. In March Borough Councillor Mrs Baybutt resigned from her post which has been filled at the recent elections by Borough Councillor Bailey. At a Meeting earlier this year a resident suggested that a separate Parish Council be formed for Appley Bridge. Appley Bridge ward Councillors, with the exception of Councillor House, agreed to garner residents' opinions on this suggestion. Councillor Jukes agreed to pursue this matter further. At the April 2022 Parish Council Meeting comments were received from a resident about Councillors behaviour and comments towards each other. It was agreed that Councillors need to work together better, and more as a team going forward as Meetings were becoming difficult to attend. The Chairman agreed to intervene when petty issues are raised to prevent any escalation.

3. FINANCE & PROCEDURE

All advisory, informative and procedural documentation used by the Parish Council were reviewed, amended and approved as required during the course of 2021. Following circulation of Budget details in February 2021, it was determined that the Parish Requirement for 2021/22 would be £19,300.00 – top up grant of £613.00. The Parish Council precepted upon West Lancs. BC for the sum of £18,687.00 for the 2021/22 financial year. Concurrent Contributions were also received. The Parish Council accounts for the year ending 31 March 2021 were approved at the May 2021 Parish Council Meeting and were audited by the internal auditor, followed by the external auditors PKF Littlejohn, with no matter arising requiring action. The Parish Council made Donations to Victim Support, Appley Bridge Pensioners, the Bowland Mountain Rescue and Old Hall Brass Band during the course of the year. 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. The Councils Financial Statement for the year ending 31 March 2022 will be approved at the May Parish Council Meeting to follow. The Parish Council has recently been informed that their Capital Bid in February 2022 for funding towards the purchase of

2 SPID's for use in the Parish, 1 in Mossy Lea and 1 in Appley Bridge, has been successful. It is hoped that these will assist in deterring motorists from speeding through the Parish. The Borough and Parish Councils were consulted during 2021 on a proposed revised Councillors Code of Conduct. The Borough Council then notified the Parish Council of their proposed amendments to the revised Code, to which the Parish Council had no objections. The Parish Council has recently been informed that the Borough Council has now formally adopted the new Code of Conduct as amended and asked that Parish Councils consider doing the same. The Parish Council will be adopting the revised and updated Model of Code of Conduct at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council to follow. A data breach occurred at the end of the July 2021 Parish Council Meeting. The Clerk immediately reported the incident to the Information Commissioners Office and took all reasonable steps to recover the information. The ICO conducted an investigation and concluded that no further action would be taken and that the Parish Council had taken all appropriate action by informing the Police, the ICO, and those whose information had been released, as soon as the breach was discovered.

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.

53 Planning Applications have been dealt with by the Parish Council during the year in comparison to 63 applications last year.

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:

POLICING

PCSO Neil Smith remains responsible for Policing Wrightington, Parbold, Hilldale, Bispham, Dalton, Newburgh, and sometimes beyond when the need requires.

Police initiatives and intervention were greatly appreciated by the residents of Appley Bridge during the summer months to address anti-social behaviour associated with access to East Quarry for swimming. A positive police presence, using Appley Bridge Village Hall at times as a base, lead to successful intervention which assisted residents greatly.

VILLAGE HALLS

Fire detection and security at the village halls is monitored and checked annually.

APPLEY BRIDGE – During the course of the year all remaining doors and windows in the village hall building were replaced with new Grey PVC ones. This has greatly improved the external appearance of the village hall which, together with the high standards of grounds maintenance and planting at the village hall, has resulted in the hall being booked for a wedding reception. In addition to this the Porch and metal work outside the hall has been painted and the wooden floor in the main hall has been sanded back and re-sealed. Extractor fans were fitted in some of the toilets

and the external lighting to the car park was improved. In December the Parish Council worked with Old Hall Brass Band, who practice in the village hall, to arrange a Brass Band Concert. This was a very enjoyable evening, if a little poorly attended this year. Broadband has been installed in the hall and it is hoped that village hall users will benefit from this going forward. Following reports from village hall users having difficulty exiting the village hall car park due to parked cars obstructing sightlines, the Parish Council requested double yellow lines for a short stretch either side of the entrance. LCC did not feel they would be appropriate at this location as they would merely displace the parked cars elsewhere.

MOSSY LEA – A new hydrogen ready central heating boiler and additional radiators were installed in the village hall. Drainage, guttering and downspout work was completed to address the damp issue which had occurred during lockdown. The damp walls are now drying out and will be treated and repainted in due course. The CCTV cameras installed approximately 15 years ago have recently been upgraded to assist in the prevention of vandalism to the single storey village hall. Some internal door handles have been replaced and a post box has been erected outside the village hall, to assist with mail delivery. Coffee Mornings, supported by the Parish Council and providing an amenity in the Parish, recommenced in November 2021 and, as people regain their confidence and begin to feel safe again mixing in larger numbers, attendance is improving with each one.

Planting of the baskets on the railings at village halls has been undertaken at both village halls and a Christmas Tree was erected outside Appley Bridge Village Hall in December. Outside taps have been installed at both village halls and long hosepipes purchased to assist in maintaining the planters outside both halls.

HIGHWAYS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Parish Council continue to pursue the removal of debris and detritus at the end of the old road adjacent to the BP garage without success.

The Council continue to lobby West Lancs. BC for improvements to the play area at Appley Lane South, to improve and enhance this amenity. It was reported that the £50,000 it was believed was available to improve this play area is actually only £18,000 at the moment. Borough Councillor Jukes has been pursuing this matter and recently reported that the Borough Council acknowledge that work is required on the play area, however, as the land on which the play area sits is leased by the Borough Council, they are reluctant to spend money on it until a renewed lease has been negotiated giving them sufficient security of tenure to invest in this site. The Parish Council has confirmed their continued support for the improvements and their donation of 2 recycled picnic benches for the play area when improvement work gets underway.

Due to the ongoing issues with both East and West Quarry the Parish Council invited the Quarry owner to attend the June 2021 Parish Council Meeting. This decision was reversed and the invitation withdrawn due to covid risks and large numbers of people meeting in the village hall. Instead, the exercise was carried out in writing. The Parish Council collected written questions which were forwarded to the quarry owner anonymously, he in turn responded to the issues and questions raised by the residents in a written report. Responses were initially reproduced and reported on the Parish Council website but were subsequently removed at the request of residents. Detailed discussions about East and West Quarry have continued at Parish Council Meetings in relation to work, development, water extraction, possible breaches of planning, permitted development, enforcement action and stop notices. Quarry issues remain ongoing with residents of Appley Bridge being divided in their opinions of whether to dewater the quarry or not.

Following numerous complaints from the Parish Council, LCC undertook a considerable amount of drainage work on Broadhurst Lane, which does appear to have addressed a number of the issues reported by the Parish Council. Similar drainage work was undertaken on Appley Lane North and the junction with Skull House Lane to alleviate significant longstanding flooding problems which, due to the down hill nature of the road also affected some homes lower down Appley Lane North. There has been some improvement since the work was undertaken.

Several reports of fly tipping on Moss Lane have been made during the year which West Lancs. BC has responded to. Litter picks have also been requested and undertaken on Moss Lane.

The Parish Council has recently been informed that their request that the Corner House, Mossy Lea, be listed as an Asset of Community Value has been successful. It is hoped that this will help the residents group and the community with their objections to the proposals to demolish the building and build 9 dwellings on the site, 4 of which will be affordable homes.

County Councillor Fillis attended the November 2021 Parish Council Meeting where East and Quarry related issues were discussed. Councillor Fillis agreed to speak with the quarry owner, outlining the residents concerns about security and poor perimeter fencing at East Quarry, and report back to the Parish Council. Councillor Fillis confirmed that he had challenged LCC's decision to accept that the revised reduced ramp be completed using permitted development rights. Councillor Fillis further discussed speeding concerns in the Parish, reporting on a project called "Community Speed Watch" where volunteers are recruited from the local area, who go out with the Police, and are trained in the use of speed guns. This has been trialled successfully in other areas and he is hoping to develop the project in Appley Bridge from early 2022. Speeding problems on Mossy Lea Road, Tunley Lane, Toogood Lane, Courage Low Lane and Moss Lane are an issue in addition to those reported in Appley Bridge.

The Parish Council requested the addition of mirrors on Mill Lane to assist motorists exiting Heron's Wharf onto Mill Lane. The sightlines to the right when exiting Heron's Wharf are obstructed by the railway bridge and the Parish Council felt the addition of mirrors would improve highway safety. LCC reported that they discourage the use of mirrors as they can often give a distorted view and do not assist motorists in determining the distance of an approaching motorist. The Parish Council continue to request a no right turn out of Heron's Wharf which they believe would improve highway safety when exiting this junction.

Repeated requests for replacement and additional litter bins in the Parish made over the past few years finally resulted in a Meeting, attended by a West Lancs. BC officer, the Chairman, the Clerk and Borough Councillor Jukes. Replacement has now started but there is still a long way to go until all requests by the Parish Council have been fulfilled.

CONCLUSION

In 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
16 May 2022