

WRIGHTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH REPORT 2023

1. PARISH COUNCIL Chairman and Vice-Chairman

At the Meeting of the Council held on 16th May 2022 Councillor Mrs J Burton was elected as Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2022/2023, and Councillor Mr C House was elected Vice-Chairman.

2. PARISH COUNCILLORS

At May 2022 Wrightington Parish Councillors were:-

APPLEY BRIDGE

Mrs K Juckes	68 Appley Lane North, Appley Bridge.
Mr C House	77 Runshaw Avenue, Appley Bridge, Wigan.
Mr R Alexander	14 Ashfield Terrace, Appley Bridge.
Mr J Chambers	Waterside House, Stonemill Rise, Appley Bridge.

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 A J Shaw	12 Town Lane, Charnock Richard.

The Parish Council began the year with 8 members. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, some Councillors and Clerk have attended training events throughout the year. The Parish Council and Councillors continued to work throughout the year with Borough Councillor Mrs Juckes, Borough Councillor Bailey and County Councillor Fillis.

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 2022. Following circulation of Budget details in January 2022 and full discussions on the income and expenditure to date and predicted income and expenditure for 2022/23 at the Budget Meeting, it was determined that the Parish Requirement for 2022/23 was £20,300.00 - £613.00 (Council Tax Support Grant) = £19,687.00 Parish Precept for 2022/23. Concurrent Contributions were also received. Following the Budget Meeting in January 2023 the Parish Council agreed to amend the way finances are reported at Meetings to assist with budgeting going forward. Councillors will be better able to monitor income and expenditure to ensure that Parish Council finances remain on track during the course of the year. The Parish Council accounts for the year ending 31 March 2022 were approved at the May 2022 Parish Council Meeting and were audited by the internal auditor, followed by the external auditors PKF Littlejohn, with no matter arising requiring action. 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 2023 will be approved at the May Parish Council Meeting to follow. A successful Capital Bid application to West Lancs. BC for funding towards the purchase of 2 SPID's, one for use in each Ward of the Parish, will see the purchase later in the year. Locations have been agreed with LCC and a consultation will shortly commence with the homes in the vicinity of the location on Appley Lane North. It is hoped that these will assist in deterring motorists from speeding through the Parish. The Parish Council made donations to the 3 primary schools in the Parish towards the provision of sign language lessons for the pupils. The Parish Council produced the Annual Newsletter this year and paid for delivery in Appley Bridge, however, they were unsuccessful in sourcing a delivery service for Mossy Lea. Copies of the Newsletter were therefore placed in the Village Hall and Churches in Mossy Lea. At the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May 2022 the Parish Council adopted the revised and updated Model of Code

of Conduct, once the Borough Council confirmed that they had also adopted it. Following this the Chairman took the Parish Council Meetings back to basics and reminded Councillors to act in accordance with the Parish Council Standing Orders and the revised Code of Conduct so that Meetings could get back on track. The Parish Council will be making progress in the coming year on obtaining dedicated email addresses for Parish Councillors and the Clerk. This should help mitigate the risk of any GDPR breaches going forward. During the course of the year Councillor Jukes was appointed as the Parish Councils representative on the Richard Durning's Charity. Allegations of misconduct against the Vice-Chairman were discussed with the Monitoring Officer at West Lancs. BC and with LALC, following which it was determined that there had been no illegal activity and no further action was required. The Parish Council has been criticised during the course of the year on a number of occasions but, having taken advice from LALC (the Parish Councils advisory body) and the West Lancs. BC Monitoring Officer, at all stages of the process, the Council as a body continues to function effectively.

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.

68 Planning Applications have been dealt with by the Parish Council during the year in comparison to 53 applications last year. Some examples are as follows:

The Parish Council objected repeatedly to the application to renovate and convert derelict buildings to create a detached dwelling at Speakmans Drive, Appley Bridge.

The Parish Council objected to the application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for the use of land for parking of not more than 16 cranes, HGV's and ancillary servicing and repairs, and office accommodation at Marsden's Crane Hire on Church Lane. The Parish Council felt the site was too small and totally unsuitable in this rural setting for the size, weight and proposed volume of cranes and HGV's at the site which is on a narrow country lane. The nuisance caused to residents by washing of vehicles and water run-off from the site containing oil, diesel and other detritus which should go into a separation tank, not onto the carriageway and into the existing drainage system, gave cause for concern. The loss of amenity to neighbouring residents is significant.

The Parish Council has recently been informed that the proposals to demolish the building and build 9 dwellings, 4 of which will be affordable homes at the Corner House, Mossy Lea, has been disposed of/closed. This means that a new planning application will be required to progress this.

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, inputting the planning application number or address of the property. 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 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, Hilddale, Bispham, Dalton, Newburgh, and sometimes beyond when the need requires. Due to the extensive geographical area to be covered, Policing is difficult and Police visibility minimal.

VILLAGE HALLS

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

APPLEY BRIDGE – The high standards of grounds maintenance and planting at the village hall, has resulted in the hall being booked for many children’s parties and family gatherings as well as the normal weekly activities which occur such as Motown Aerobics, Pilates, children’s and adult’s martial arts classes, WI and Brass Band rehearsals. The Chairman and Clerk have met with the surveyors dealing with the proposed extension at No.1 Lowther Terrace which will involve the demolition and rebuilding of the party wall at the rear of the Village Hall. Discussions and investigations remain ongoing before the work can be undertaken. Residents and participants in the Remembrance Day Service at the War Memorial on Appley Lane North returned to the Village Hall for refreshments afterwards.

MOSSY LEA – Coffee Mornings, supported by the Parish Council and providing an amenity in the Parish continue to flourish once a month in the village hall. The Church of God are beginning to increase their weekly meeting bookings and there are now a number of sewing type classes delivered in the hall most months, with the Crafty Ladies meeting in the hall 2 Fridays each month. A new hot water boiler has recently been fitted in the kitchen.

Both village halls were used for the by-election earlier in the year and again for the recent Borough and Parish Council elections. Red Ensign flags were flown at both halls on Merchant Navy Day. Union Jacks were flown to mark the Queens’ Platinum Jubilee but were subsequently flown with a black ribbon on to mark the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in September 2022. Planting of the baskets on the railings has been undertaken at both village halls and a Christmas Tree was again erected outside Appley Bridge Village Hall in December.

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 ask that the route is kept clear as a walking route to avoid the BP Garage forecourt. The Council has recently been informed that a gate is going to be put across the entrance to the site from Mossy Lea Road, and that the site is currently being used by LCC to store materials for top dressing.

The Council continue to lobby West Lancs. BC for improvements to the play area at Appley Lane South, to improve and enhance this amenity. 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 received resources from LCC as part of the Slow Down, Save Lives campaign. Large yellow signs have been displayed in both wards.

During the year the Parish Council were notified that the route along Hall Lane and Parbold Hill is now a red route which means there is no stopping at any time. It is hoped that this will assist in preventing the congestion and dangerous parking which used to occur near Fairy Glen.

The Parish Council has continued to report the poor state of the carriageway around the roundabout at Junction 27 of the M6, the persistent flooding on the roundabout during heavy rainfall makes the roundabout very dangerous.

The broken seat on the grassed area near the Mossy Lea Road/Boundary Lane junction has been removed as it had fallen into disrepair. As LCC, West Lancs. BC, and Wigan MBC would not take responsibility for the bench the Parish Council agreed to take the asset over. The bench will shortly be replaced.

The Parish Council purchased a flowering Cherry Tree now planted at The Meadows for everyone to enjoy. It was planted as part of the Queen’s Green Canopy to mark her Platinum Jubilee.

During the course of the year 3 bus shelters were cleaned and the Parish Council replaced 2 defibrillators, under warranty, which developed faults. The defibrillator cabinet at Sharrocks was replaced following an accident in which a delivery driver damaged the cabinet. 2 defibrillators were also re-located with all 6 now being functional and on The Circuit, which is the database where all publicly accessible defibrillators are recorded. The 6 locations are now as follows: Mossy Lea Village Hall, Mossy Lea Road. The Pensioners Hall, Chisnall Avenue, Mossy Lea. Sharrocks, Mossy Lea Road. Appley Bridge Village Hall, Appley Lane North. Maria Costello, Hall Lane, Appley Bridge and The Boathouse, Mill Lane, Appley Bridge.

The Parish Council plans to erect a fourth notice board at the junction of Chisnall Avenue and Mossy Lea Road will be carried forward to this year as a mutually convenient time for the Clerk to meet the supplier on site could not be established before the end of the 2022/23 financial year.

Parking issues outside the White Lion Public House, Mossy Lea Road, have been reported to the Parish Council during the course of the year with these reports being passed on to the PCSO. Quite recently parking problems and planning issues, along with noise nuisance issues, have been reported by a number of residents in the vicinity of the pub. The Parish Council asked LCC for their assistance with the parking problems but they say that this is a Police matter. Borough Councillor Jukes has agreed to pursue this matter with the residents. Parent and staff parking associated with the Primary School adds to the problems at this location.

During the course of the year the Parish Council were told by LCC that they are moving away from the Report It system on their website and are moving towards using the Love Clean Streets App to report faults and highway matters online. Not all functions are up and running on the Love Clean Streets App at the moment but it is hoped that faults, obstructions, or highway matters can be reported more easily, at the time of observation, with the additional facility of being able to upload photographs on site at the time that the matter is being reported.

Ongoing issues with both East and West Quarry continue. Detailed discussions at Parish Council Meetings in relation to work, development, water extraction, possible breaches of planning, permitted development, enforcement action and stop notices, have taken place. Following the sad death of another teenager swimming in East Quarry in July 2022 the Parish Council had some fractious Meetings, with members of the public, and the Parish Council, expressing their opinions on whether East Quarry should be drained and filled, or not. Quarry issues remain ongoing with residents of Appley Bridge now being divided in their opinions of whether to dewater the quarry or not. The Parish Council on a majority vote, voted to support the draining and filling of East Quarry to 1 metre below the current water level and then re-watering. Aesthetically the view of the quarry will be the same but the attraction and dangers of swimming in it would be removed. The Parish Council has recently contacted the quarry owner to ask when dewatering will commence as the licence to dewater the site by 70% was granted approx. 2 years ago. The Parish Council has pointed out that their support on this matter is not for the owner of the Quarry personally, nor for any of his companies, but it is for the draining and filling of East Quarry to save lives.

With regard to West Quarry which is owned by the same person as East Quarry, the Parish Council is aware of the ongoing legal action taken by the Environment Agency against the company who owns the quarry, and against the owner of the said company. The legal action is for a number of issues including the storage of hazardous combustible bales of waste, faulty gas monitoring equipment and lack of gas monitoring, amongst other things. West Lancs. BC has also served Enforcement Notices on the landowner to stop the opening of an access off Appley Lane North, the creation of a car park/hard standing and burning of the combustible waste. The Parish Council has requested periodic updates from LCC, the Environment Agency and West Quarry about a number of issues in relation to West Quarry. The Parish Council has pointed out that they do not support any of the illegal activity taking place on West Quarry.

The Parish Council has recently been informed that a large piece of West Quarry, behind the houses on Appley Lane North and to the front of houses on Lowther Terrace, has been sold to Northern Diver who have made their proposals for the land public, but have not as yet submitted any

planning applications to support the proposals. Their proposals indicate some housing, a 25m swimming pool, storage buildings and office buildings. Over recent weeks it is understood that Northern Diver have commenced clearing the land, taking action to define the boundaries of the land they have purchased, felling trees and revealing gas pipes and monitoring equipment. Concern has been expressed that some of the pipelines have been damaged, that the site is still leaking leachate and that the trees were protected under the Forestry Act.

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
22nd May 2023