

WRIGHTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH REPORT 2004

1. PARISH COUNCIL Chairman and Vice-Chairman

At the Meeting of the Council held on 19 May 2003 Councillor Mr F Hodgkinson was elected as Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2003/2004, and Councillor Mr W Lloyd was elected Vice-Chairman.

2. PARISH COUNCILLORS

The Councillors for this Parish are currently:-

APPLEY BRIDGE

Mr Ian Young	Yew Tree Cottage, Robin Hood Lane, Wrightington.
Mr D Thompson	15 Lowther Terrace, Appley Bridge, Wrightington.
Mr C Taylor	13 Appley Lane North, Appley Bridge, Wrightington.
Mr J Clinch	16 Clifton Crescent, Wigan

MOSSY LEA

Mrs Judith Burton	2 Courage Low Lane, Wrightington.
Mr Frank Hodgkinson	19 Broadhurst Lane, Wrightington.
Mr Wilfred Lloyd	22 Church Lane, Wrightington.
Mrs A Rees	

In November 2003 Councillor Mrs O'Neill Maiorana tendered her resignation from the Parish Council, following advertisement in, Post Offices and Notice Boards, Mrs Alison Rees was welcomed onto the Parish Council as a Mossy Lea Ward Councillor with effect from March 2004. Once again the Parish Council stands at its optimum 8 Members.

3. FINANCE

The Parish Council precepted upon West Lancashire District Council for the sum of £4950.00 for the financial year 2003/2004.

From 1 April 2003 changes in the way the Parish Council Finances were handled became effective, allowing the Council to function efficiently and effectively but without the necessity to increase the Parish Precept dramatically. It would appear that handling receipts and payments in these early stages has worked quite well and neither Village Hall has seen any detrimental effects as a result of the changes. The Clerk will have to account for the dramatic changes in the Councils financial position for the purposes of the external audit this year. The Parish Council will continue to monitor this situation making the necessary changes as and when required to comply with the views of the Audit Commission and for the mutual benefit of the Parish Council and Village Hall Committees.

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.

54 Planning Applications have been dealt with by the Parish Council during the year, some of which were controversial and involved discussions with the Parishioners to ascertain their views, prior to the Parish Council making their observations.

The District 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 direct to West Lancashire District Council, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, Lancs, in writing in order that they can be brought to the attention of the Planning Committee.

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.

In July 2003 the Parish Council were required to submit 4 items for inclusion in a Parish Council Business Plan for action by LCC – the following items were put forward: For LCC to attend to an remove overhanging trees and vegetation causing problems for residents in Skull House Lane; review of and installation of adequate traffic control at Dangerous Corner; a reduction in the speed limit on Church Lane to 30 mph and; action to alleviate parking problems on Appley Lane North. The Parish Council await the outcome of these requests.

A representative of Identislot attended a Parish Council meeting to explain their joint initiative with West Lancs DC to improve safety and security in the home.

A representative of West Lancs DC attended a Parish Council Meeting to outline the options and request the Parish Council views on the proposed new play equipment to be installed on the Playing Fields at Appley Lane South. It is understood that this equipment has now been ordered and will be installed shortly.

The Parish Council are continuing discussions with the Green Centre which will ultimately result in the installation of Cycle Racks at both Village Halls.

In January 2004 PC Steve Hackney introduced himself to the Parish Council as the new Community Beat Manager for our area, based at Parbold Police Station.

The Parish Council arranged two public meetings in January to discuss the draft proposals, set out by the Boundary Committee, for the review of 2 tier areas in Cumbria and Lancashire. The Parish Council felt that consultation was poor from the Boundary Committee and therefore arranged the public meetings. The meetings, together with the results of a survey sent out by the Parish Council and distributed by the Parish Plan Steering Committee, assisted the Parish Council in ascertaining the views of the parishioners on the proposals. The general consensus of opinion was that the majority wished to maintain the Status Quo however, if the forthcoming referendum results in a vote in favour of Regional Government, Wrightington Parish Council requested that a further option

be added to the proposals ie: to include West Lancs with Central Lancashire, rather than go into Wigan as proposed.

The Parish Council website has now been set up with the aid of funding included in the production of the Parish Plan. The site is still in the initial stages and the Clerk will shortly be undertaking the necessary training to enable the website to be updated regularly.

PARISH PLAN

Following the two Public Meetings held on this subject, both of which were reasonably well attended a Parish Plan Steering Committee was formed with representation from Members of the Public in both Wards of the Parish and representatives of the Parish Council. The Parish Plan Steering Committee was successful in obtaining a grant of £5000 from the Countryside Agency to help towards the cost of producing a Parish Plan. Questionnaires were compiled and circulated throughout the Parish and, upon their return the responses were analysed and the resulting statistics were used to form the basis of the Parish Plan. In February 2004 an Open Day was arranged at Wrightington Hotel and Country Club to highlight the content of the Plan and to ascertain parishioners views on the final draft prior to going to print. The Parish Plan has now been successfully completed and printed and will now be forwarded to the Countryside Agency. The Parish Council would like to thank Councillor Lloyd and all members of the Steering Committee for their continued work on this document.

APPLEY BRIDGE VILLAGE HALL

The Green Centre have tidied the car park, removing the rubbish and garden refuse from the rear of the Village Hall and cleaned out the gutters. It is anticipated that this work will be undertaken regularly to keep on top of the problem. The Parish Council are obtaining quotations for painting the interior of the Village Hall and the kitchen and will, over the next few months, be looking into the necessary repairs or renewals required to the large window in the main hall. Emergency lighting has now been installed at the entrances and exits and the necessary electrical work has been undertaken to ensure compliance with electrical checks and regulations. A number of constructive Village Hall Committee Meetings have taken place during the course of the year. The Village Hall continues to be used on a regular basis by various organisations.

MOSSY LEA

The Village Hall is used regularly by the playgroup and a number of outside bodies. The Hall is in need of extensive work to the outside and the Car Park however, in view of the continued incidences of vandalism the Parish Council are reluctant to undertake the work until this is brought under control. The Parish Council are currently obtaining quotations for replacement doors, front windows, gutters, downspouts and fascias in white UPVC. In the meantime painting of the windows and staining of the doors to the outside of the Village Hall has been completed whilst a team of volunteers painted the interior. The Parish Council were successful in obtaining a grant from West Lancs DC Capital Bids, towards the purchase of new tables and chairs for use in the village hall, with the Parish Council making up any shortfall in costs. These will be purchased in the very near future. A new Notice Board has been erected at the front of the Village Hall and gates at the entrance to the Car Park, which will be closed on a random basis and it is hoped will deter people from parking and congregating on the car park in the evenings. The Green Centre have tidied the Car Park and it is hoped that this can be undertaken regularly to keep on top of the situation. It became necessary in March to replace the fire extinguishers to comply with Inspection regulations. The Village Hall Committee meet regularly to discuss matters associated with the use and running of the Village Hall.

Christmas Trees were erected outside both Village Halls again this year.

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

The Council have continued to correspond with the Police and LCC as to the adequacy of the Traffic Calming Measures installed on Mill Lane. The Council, and many residents, feel that the calming measures are in fact quite dangerous and have stressed this on several occasions. It would still appear however, that LCC and the Police do not agree with the Parish Council or the Parishioners.

Major repairs have been completed to the bus shelter opposite Crow Orchard Garage on Mossy Lea Road. The Clerk is still negotiating with First Manchester Buses following three incidents where Buses have collided with the Bus Shelter at the top of Appley Lane North, opposite the Dicconson Arms. An initial offer has been made but rejected by the Parish Council as too low.

The Parish Council continue to lobby County Councillor Trickett for his support with their request for a reduction in the Speed Limit on Church Lane, Wroughtington, to 30 mph. LCC have agreed to review the built up stretch of Church Lane once the new Central Government Guidance is issued.

The Council received objections to and went on to have detailed discussions with the residents of Chisnall Avenue and West Lancs DC relating to the imposition of a TPO on trees adjacent to the Church Car Park.

The Council objected to the revised proposals for developments at Lassall House which constituted development of Green Belt Land, a change of use, would have an adverse impact on the area and would compromise Highway Safety.

The Parish Council and residents in the Parish had strong objections to the closure of the unofficial access to the M6 Motorway at Mill Lane, Charnock Richard, which resulted in a dramatic increase in the volume, and size, of traffic using Mossy Lea Road. It would appear that this is not likely to be reopened in the future.

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
21 June 2004