

WRIGHTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH REPORT 2006

1. PARISH COUNCIL Chairman and Vice-Chairman

At the Meeting of the Council held on 16 May 2005 Councillor Mr W Lloyd was elected as Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2005/2006, and Councillor Mr F Hodgkinson was elected Vice-Chairman.

2. PARISH COUNCILLORS

The Councillors for this Parish are:-

APPLEY BRIDGE

Mr Ian Young	Yew Tree Cottage, Robin Hood Lane, Wrightington.
Mr D Thompson	15 Lowther Terrace, Appley Bridge, Wrightington. (Now Resigned)
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	Quarry Bank Barn, Hillhouse Fold Lane, Wrightington.

The Parish Council currently has 7 Members following the resignation of Councillor Thompson in February 2006.

3. FINANCE

The Parish Council precepted upon West Lancashire District Council for the sum of £5321.25 for the financial year 2005/2006 and received Concurrent Contributions of £4000.30.

Changes in the way the Parish Council Finances are handled, implemented in 2003, appear to be effective and the Council continues to function efficiently and effectively. The Councils Financial Statement for the year ending 31 March 2006 is attached.

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.

58 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. (In comparison to 69 applications last year.)

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.

The issue of the inadequate access to the play equipment on the playing field at Appley Lane South has again featured in Parish Council discussions this year with the Council suggesting a location for a more appropriate access point, however to date there has been little response to this suggestion.

The Green Centre closed this year as expected however, following a successful bid for funding a new body known as The Rural Community Partnership Trust has been formed to service the same villages connected with the activities of the Green Centre.

Following the initiation of partnership discussions between Parish, District and County Councils on a Parish Charter, Councillor Clinch agreed to represent the Parish Council on the Joint Working Party. A number of meetings have taken place and the Council recently discussed the Draft Charter however, scepticism with regard to partnership agreements is still strong and the Council will discuss this in more detail once the final Charter has been circulated for consideration.

PARISH PLAN

The Parish Plan was successfully launched at the beginning of last year however implementation of its content has proved more difficult than anticipated. Following lengthy discussion Councillor Lloyd agreed to redraft the Action Plan for further consideration. Planning issues and the issue of cycle tracks in the Parish have been followed up however progress on other issues in the Parish Plan remains slow.

APPLEY BRIDGE VILLAGE HALL

The Council painted the main hall, the entrance and the kitchen, and temporary patching repairs have been made to the floor in the main hall to ensure users safety however, the Parish Council have recently been notified of their successful Capital Bid to West Lancs DC for a contribution towards the cost of lifting the existing flooring and stripping back to the original floorboards which can then be sanded waxed and sealed or replaced if necessary. A number of constructive Village Hall Committee Meetings have taken place during the course of the year and following one of these it was agreed that the Village Hall would be designated a No Smoking area. Over the Christmas break there was a problem with subsidence on the village hall car park and a hole appeared. Following several telephone calls and discussions eventually, due to the health and safety aspect of this situation, a District Council Officer agreed to assist the Parish Council and arranged for the necessary work to be undertaken to backfill the hole and re-tarmac the surface of the car park. Once again a large Christmas Tree was erected outside the hall. The Village Hall continues to be used on a regular basis by various organisations.

MOSSY LEA

The Village Hall was regularly used by a preschool group and a number of outside bodies at the start of the year. As a result of heated discussions in relation to the rental of the village hall by the preschool group, which culminated in the fact that the Parish Council could not, for reasons of fairness and equity to other users, reduce their rent, Pingawings preschool made the decision to vacate the premises in early November. Following the success of the Parish Councils Capital Bid to WLDC new windows, doors, gutters, fascias and downspouts were installed in the village hall. Within a short time after their installation however, several incidences of vandalism lead to the replacement of a broken double glazed window and several broken downspouts and sections of guttering. Vandalism has continued to be ongoing and frequent and the Parish Council now find themselves looking at the cost of installing CCTV cameras at the village hall. Following the completion of major plumbing work to alleviate longstanding problems in the toilets and repairs to the central heating system resulting in the installation of pressure release valves, the whole of the interior of the village hall has been painted, walls, woodwork and ceilings, including the removal of the very large Notice Board in the main hall which was somewhat of an eyesore. A new cleaner has been appointed and it is hoped that the village hall will now function to its full potential once again. The Parish Council were unsuccessful in their request for a contribution from the West Lancs DC Capital Bid scheme towards re-surfacing of the village hall car park, this project may be re-addressed at a later date in view of the problems with vandalism and security which are currently taking priority. A Christmas Tree was erected inside the Porch of the Village Hall this year and looked extremely attractive.

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 continue to correspond with LCC as to the adequacy of the Traffic Calming Measures installed on Mill Lane, Appley Bridge. Together with this ongoing requests for a lowering of the speed limit on Church Lane, Mossy Lea, have been made and included the submission of a petition to support the Council request from residents of Church Lane and Mossy Lea Road. It would seem that LCC Officers do not agree with the Parish Council or the Parishioners on either of these matters. In addition to this there are severe parking problems on Appley Lane North – users of the Northern Diver industrial site and rail users, park on one side of Appley Lane North thereby causing an obstruction for other road users. The Parish Council have contacted Railtrack to suggest the acquisition of land adjacent to the railway station which could be used to extend parking provision for rail users however, it would appear that Railtrack do not own any additional land, nor are they prepared to acquire any. The Parish Council believe that LCC are currently undertaking feasibility studies to asses the situation and a possible solution.

Parking problems at Mossfields, Mossy Lea, are still prominent. During the year Parish Councillors met with representatives of WLDC and LCC to address the problem by suggesting the creation of a lay by in front of the properties. The Council are continuing to follow this up and await further responses in due course.

The residents of Mossy Lea and Appley Bridge continue to have problems and issues with the collection of recyclable materials however these problems have been added to by the recent introduction of wheelie bins. There appears to be no continuity in collection days despite the fact the District Council assure the Parish Council that all residents have been notified of the correct collection days. This will be monitored and commented upon as appropriate.

In more general terms the Parish Council has discussed a number of applications for definitive map modification orders for various public footpaths in the Parish. Each of the applications has been

discussed in detail and a decision made based on the merits and individual circumstances of the application. A number of incidences of importation of various materials including green waste, sewage and human effluent have been reported to the Parish Council who have investigated the legalities of each incident to ensure that all conditions and environmental aspects are complied with. The Council has also requested several litter picks at numerous locations within the Parish including Moss Lane, Mossy Lea Road, Broadhurst Lane, Carr Lane, Church Lane and Tunley Lane amongst others. The litter picks although undertaken are not always to the standards expected by the Parish Council and usually result in a further request being made.

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 2006