

# WRIGHTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

At the Budget Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 15 February 2016 at 6:00 pm at Mossy Lea Village Hall, prior to the February Parish Council Meeting, the following were present:

Councillors: Mr F Hodgkinson (Chairman), Mrs J Burton, Mr F Johnson, Mr P Gartside.

1. Apologies – No apologies were received.
2. To discuss the Current Financial Years Expenses and Anticipated Expenses - The Council discussed in detail expenses paid to date and anticipated expenses for the remainder of the year, assessing the potential balance to be carried forward into the 2016/2017 financial year. It was confirmed that a cheque from Mossy Lea Village Hall income is on the Parish Council Agenda this evening. The balance carried forward appears to be higher than in previous years however, the Clerk stressed that some of the balance carried forward is CIL money which has to be dealt with in a particular manner.
3. To discuss projects and anticipated income and expenditure for the next Financial Year + Review Clerk's Salary - The Clerk reminded Councillors that the CIL (Neighbourhood Portion) money, already received by the Parish Council, has to be used for specific purposes agreed by the Borough Council. The Parish Council agreed that the initial £227.72 CIL receipts have been allocated for marking out the car park at Appley Bridge Village Hall, and the second receipt of £2234.31 has been set aside towards the possible extension of Mossy Lea Village Hall. The Clerk expressed concern that, if the Parish Council do not consider increasing the Precept, and expenses continue to increase, the small anticipated balance carried forward may not be enough to sustain the Parish Council for too much longer. Councillor Johnson again reported that he has compared Precept figures, and accounting reserves, from other Parishes to those in Wrightington. It appears that some Parishes build up reserves for specific projects and many of those with Reserve Accounts have larger Precepts and fewer electors than Wrightington. The Parish Council are aware that it will be necessary to source additional outside funding to extend Mossy Lea Village Hall, however, funding bids are more likely to be successful if the Parish Council can indicate a percentage contribution towards the overall costs from their funds. The Chairman also pointed out that the Clerk has not received an increase in her salary for several years now and feels that this issue should be addressed. (The Clerk left the Meeting whilst Parish Councillors discussed this – on her return) Councillors reported that it had been **Resolved: That the Clerk's salary will be increased to £14.00 per hour with effect from 1/4/16. Therefore, £14.00 x 12.5 hours per week x 52 weeks = £9,100.00 per annum.** The Clerk reported that changes to the level of concurrent contributions and the council tax support grant, both issued by West Lancs. BC, are unknown as yet until West Lancs. BC holds its Budget Meeting in the next couple of weeks. However, the Clerk can report that things will either remain the same as last year or, there will be a 10% reduction in both concurrent funding and council tax support grant each year for the next 3 year or, there will be the full 30% reduction next year in concurrent funding and support grant. The Clerk had produced three sets of estimates showing the figures, using a Parish requirement of £13,000 as an example, of how the proposed possible scenarios which could result from West Lancs. BC Budget Meeting will affect the Parish Council finances. The Clerk also reported that the Parish Council have to put a work place pension in place by 2017 and a decision needs to be taken on which pension provider the Parish Council will choose as there will be financial implications for the Parish Council as the employer as well as the Clerk as the employee. The Clerk outlined that there are a number of options open to the Parish Council. Once the Council has chosen the Pension provider and the work place pension is put in place, the Clerk will automatically be enrolled in the pension scheme unless, she chooses to opt out. The Council can choose to use any chosen pension scheme, however, the Clerk confirmed that most Parish Councils are choosing either, the Local Government Pension Scheme or NEST. The Local Government Pension Scheme will have an initial set up fee of approx. £1,500.00, with Employer contributions of somewhere around 24.8% of the Clerk's pensionable salary, there are also administrative charges to be incurred when the Clerk retires and draws on her pension. The alternative NEST Pension Scheme, set up by the Government for small businesses or employers with few employees, has no set up charges and employer contributions are 1%-3% of the Clerk's Pensionable Salary. As the Parish Councils accountant, the Clerk advised that it

would be more beneficial, and cost effective, for the Parish Council to choose the NEST Pension Scheme. Following detailed discussions on this subject it was **Resolved: That the Parish Council will put the NEST Pension Scheme in place when instructed to do so at their staging date by the Department of Work and Pensions.** Taking account of the reducing balances being carried forward each year, the increases in outgoings for the forthcoming year, including the enhancements to the outside of both village halls, the fact that there is a strong possibility that the concurrent contributions and the council tax support grant are likely to be reduced by the Borough Council and, the fact that the Parish Council would hope to extend Mossy Lea Village Hall at some time in the near future to increase the size of the main hall and make it a larger and more workable amenity, it became obvious that the Parish Council must consider increasing the Parish Precept to implement all these things fully.

4. To confirm the Parish Precept for 2016/2017 - Following detailed discussions, and taking account of all the above influential factors, it was **Resolved – That the Parish Requirement for 2016/17 is £15,000.00 and, that the Parish Precept therefore depends upon the decision West Lancs. BC make at their Budget Meeting later this month with regard to funding cuts. Following discussions with West Lancs. BC regarding the Precept it became clear that it is necessary to submit an exact figure to the Borough Council. After speaking with the Chairman, and going over the detailed discussions on this subject at the Budget Meeting, it was determined that the Parish Council must provide for the worst case scenario at this stage and estimate a Parish Requirement for 2016/17 of £15,000.00 - £612.00 (the lowest Council Tax Support Grant which could be paid to them in 2016/17) = £14,388.00 Parish Precept. Therefore, Wrightington Parish Council will Precept for £14,388.00 for the financial year 2016/17.**

Chairman:

Date: