

# WEST MOORS TOWN COUNCIL



## VALUE FOR MONEY STATEMENT

Adopted by the Council on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020  
Reviewed and Revised: **Due 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

## **VALUE FOR MONEY (VFM)**

The primary source of income for the Town Council is the Precept, which is a local tax collected by Dorset Council on behalf of the Town.

This money is required to run the Town Council and pay to maintain and improve the facilities, activities and services that we provide and is the operational cost difference between expected expenditure and income in any one year. A proportion of this money is prudently held in reserve for either future planned projects and/or unexpected events. Good value for money is the optimal use of resources to achieve the intended outcomes. Value for money is not always about achieving the lowest initial price.

### **To have good financial control through legal procedures**

The Clerk is CiLCA qualified and the Council has adopted the General Power of Competence. The Council reviews its Financial Management annually; including the Financial Risk Policy and Standing Orders and adheres to the Financial Regulations.

### **Quality Audit Process**

The Council has a three tier level of audit where one of the Town Councillors acts as their own auditor and makes quarterly checks to ensure that the procedures are being adhered to and the budgets monitored. There is an audit carried out every 6 months by the Council's appointed internal auditor as required under the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

Finally there is a statutory audit carried out by an external auditor annually, to ensure that all financial transactions are recorded and accurate.

The Precept in West Moors is currently £146,383 (2020/21). This equates to £47.45 per household per year, or 91p per week for a Band D household.

### **For their council tax payment towards the Town Council residents are provided with:**

- ELECTIONS every four/five years to allow them to vote for local candidates to sit on the Council.
- An ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING in April of each year for them to voice their opinion on the important issues affecting West Moors.
- Access to a LOCAL COUNCILLOR, who will live within easy distance of them and is easily contactable and will help wherever possible or signpost to someone who can.
- The right to ATTEND ANY MEETING of the Council or its Committees, (except meetings or part of meetings that may be confidential) and a time is reserved during every meeting for residents to ask questions and/or make statements.
- A formal consultative body for all PLANNING APPLICATIONS that are lodged in West Moors. Applicants and residents are listened to and represented.

- A managed ASSET BASE on behalf of its residents which includes the Fryer Field with grass football pitches, a car park and a sports pavilion; the multi-use games area (MUGA); two tennis courts; skatepark and teen shelter; two children's play areas; the Petwyn, which is designated Village Green and the War Memorial. There are also four bus stops, three notice boards, various litter bins, seats and signs.
- Managed ALLOTMENTS on leased land at Gullivers Farm.
- Annual display of CHRISTMAS LIGHTS in the Town.
- Financial help to the YOUTH & COMMUNITY CLUB and a number of local groups and charities, which help sustain their existences.
- Press releases and newsletters which are distributed via email, Social media and local magazines. These are constantly kept up to date.
- EXPERIENCED, WELL TRAINED and QUALIFIED Council staff who ensure the smooth operation and delivery of Council services.
- TRANSPARENCY in all the Town Council dealing. All documents and financial records, with the exception of those protected by law, are available for public inspection and scrutiny and most are available to view on the website.
- All income being directed towards undertakings and projects that the Council believe will benefit West Moors and its residents.

### **Offering the maximum benefit of assets**

1. Sports, cemetery and allotment fees - the hire rates of Town Council owned assets are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are delivering value for money.
2. **Public consultations- Community engagement – Held as and when required**
  - a. Via a skate park party, the Council established whether the community valued the Skate Park facility, before deciding whether to spend money on upgrading it.
  - b. Via an exhibition board and multiple choice of designs of a play area, various sessions took place for the public and especially the children to choose their preferred design. The preferred design was then installed by the Council
  - c. Via a survey questionnaire form in 2016, the public were asked what they wanted for the future of Fryer Field.
  - d. Support from local football and charity organisations were sought for the installation of the MUGA in 2009.
3. An annual community event is held on Fryer Field, to provide an opportunity for the diverse groups in West Moors to meet each other and the Council.
4. Allotments – the fees are competitive. The Council does not make money here, simply providing the facility for the community.

5. Tennis Courts – are free to use and the local First School benefit from the Multi Use Games Area. The Town Council are aware that taking part in sports is important for children and adults as it reduces stress, enhances mood and improves health.
6. The sales of kitchen caddy and dog waste bags have remained the same for many years. They are at a highly competitive price offering high quality product.
7. Stockists for food caddy bins and glass boxes – We save residents petrol costs and personal time collecting from a local depot in Ferndown.

### **Setting a fair and reasonable annual Town precept**

The Finance and General-Purpose committee meets in November/December to consider the following year's precept giving careful consideration to the previous year's expenditure and any anticipated future budget requirements. The findings of the meeting are placed before the full council at the January Council meeting.

### **Management of the performance of the office staff members**

The Council currently employs a Clerk, Assistant to the Clerk, 2 gate keepers and a cleaner. The Council pay office staff in line with NALC national pay scales and they are also enrolled in the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Training of both Councillors and the staff is considered wise investment as it increases skills for the benefit of the Town.

### **Conclusion**

This Value for money statement aims to outline how value for money is delivered with specific regard to the following in the use of public money and the Council's resources:

**Efficiency** - The relationship between the output from goods or services and the resources to produce them – **spending well.**

**Effectiveness** - the relationship between the intended and actual results of public spending (outcomes) – **spending wisely**

**Economy** - Minimising the cost of resources used or required – **spending less.**

The Clerk ensures, as far as reasonable and practicable, that for routine administration expenditure the cheapest prices are paid and works with other Town/Parish Council's to obtain economies of scale.

### **Examples of how expenditure is scrutinised:**

- PAT testing was carried out in January 2023, after locating a new service provider at a more reasonable rate, still complying with legislation.
- Skate Park tenders were received after being published on the 'Contracts Finder website', increasing the opportunity to receive competitive quotes.
- The Council's waste collection contract was reviewed in April 2019 saving over £600 a year.
- Cemetery maintenance
  - The cemetery gate was dismantled and removed free of charge by a local company

- West Moors Town Council is under a statutory duty to ensure the health and safety of visitors to the cemetery. It is responsible for the overall safety within a burial ground under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability Act 1957. To ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, their sites are maintained in a safe condition, memorials are inspected and any memorials that pose a risk to Health and Safety are made safe. Due to established trusting working relationships, the memorials were tested in November 2019 by a trusted supplier free of charge, demonstrating 100% value for money.
- The Council believes that more can sometimes be achieved by assisting local organisations financially rather than by its own actions and therefore maintains a grant programme.
- Newsletters - The Council publishes a newsletter every quarter which is delivered electronically to all groups in the Community. The editorial is all in house, with no publicity costs.
- Facebook - The Town Council Facebook enables the Council to inform residents of local and countywide issues.
- Website – Community pages are updated by a local IT volunteer at no cost.

### **Investing in the future**

West Moors Town Council acknowledges the importance of prudently investing all funds held on behalf of the community by the Council.

- The Town Council uses Lloyds Bank for its day to day banking needs
- Funds not immediately required are held in the Lloyds Bank Business Instant Access Deposit Account and CCLA Public Sector Deposit Account.
- The Council currently has some funds invested with the CCLA Local Authorities Property Fund and the Finance Committee maintains oversight of this investment.
- The Council holds earmarked funds for future projects.
- West Moors Town Council maintain strong relationships with the local Community Highway Officers (CHO's), the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) and community organisations, in order to achieve the main objective which is "Working for the public good". We help each other to improve the quality of life of residents.

### **Review**

This Policy will be reviewed every 3 to 4 years, depending on any changes in the organisation, legislation, staff and or assets owned/services provided