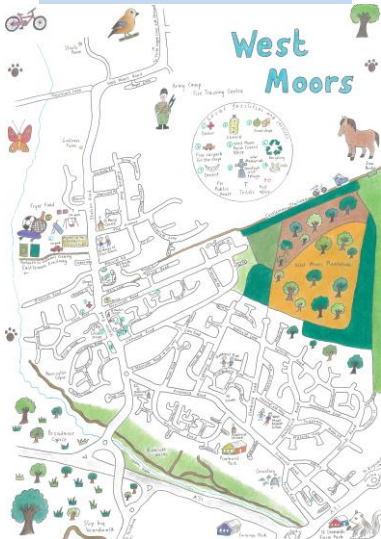




West Moors Parish Council

Spring 2014 Newsletter



Annual Public Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting for the public was held on Thursday April 10 and was, sadly, sparsely attended by West Moors Parishioners although those who did attend made very valid contributions.

It would seem therefore that the majority of our parishioners are happy with the manner in which we look after the interests of West Moors.

The winner of the Design a Map competition, Julia Brown received her prize of £100 kindly donated by the Local Action Group. The winning map design will be displayed on the parish council noticeboard located outside Holly Court, Station Road.

Annual Public Meeting Reports

Parish Council Chairman - Cllr Pete Holden

This last year has seen the Parish Council develop further and taking a more active role in matters affecting West Moors. The Parish Office is increasingly seen by residents as a significant place to get information and advice, as well as being a central point in which to make comment, complaints and sometimes even compliments on matters concerning the various councils, authorities and public bodies involved in West Moors.

A very special thank you goes to all our staff for their hard work and dedication to their duties. Most commonly it is our staff that appear as the public face of the Council and their highly professional and diligent manner are a credit to us all.

Just a quick mention of the weather, although, compared to other parts of the Country and some parts locally, West Moors was not too badly affected by the wettest winter on record, some households did suffer flooding.

During the year Councillor Christine Wood resigned and she is thanked for her contribution to the village, and we have been joined by Councillor Robert Smith, who is a very welcomed addition to the Council.

From a financial point of view the Council, through sound management and appropriate decision making is on a firm footing. Funds are being accrued for the larger longer term projects and investments have been made that will hopefully see better returns than previously.

However, in spite of forced delays to certain projects, particularly the children's play areas, work continues and new items of play equipment have been installed. Also, there have been hopeful signs recently of movement toward attaining some land for allotments and funds are still being raised for this project.

One large expenditure project that will be undertaken later this year, which has been made a top priority by continual acts of vandalism, is the replacement fencing for the artificial turf part of the MUGA. This is planned work and will be an improvement to the facility. Both the Police and the Police Commissioner have been made fully aware of the problems of vandalism we have had in and around the MUGA and it is hoped that suitable measures will be taken to curb such activity. To aid this we will be installing additional CCTV monitoring of the area.



Annual Parish meeting reports continued

The Legacy Award has gone, for its second year, to another very talented younger person of the village. Elisabeth Hood is a tri-athlete of international standard, with very high prospects and it is hoped that our contribution can help her achieve her goals.

In all that the Parish Council does, or plans to do, every consideration at every stage is given to assuring value for money, sound and open governance, and providing facilities that meet the needs and aspirations of West Moors residents

Planning Consultative Committee

Cllr Mrs J Ware

The Planning Consultative Committee, comprising of 9 parish councillors, has met regularly throughout the year to consider and make recommendations to the planning authority on planning applications for West Moors.

There has been a sharp decrease in applications with only 37 applications received this year (2013/14) compared to 70 in 2012/13, 68 in 2011/12 and 76 in 2010/11.

The committee takes into account areas of special interest and the desire to maintain the character of West Moors and West Moors Parish Council always aims to take a consistent approach to local planning matters. Deliberation of the 37 applications resulted in a total of 4 objections from the Parish Council with only 1 of these also being refused by East Dorset District Council.

This means that EDDC permitted 3 applications that the parish council raised objections to and they also refused permission for two applications that the parish council did not object to.

Two Planning Appeals for applications objected by us and EDDC have been granted permission by the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol: Rear of 8/10 Ashurst Road and 6 Elmhurst Road

Residents of West Moors are more than welcome to attend planning meetings which start at 7pm on the dates advertised.

Environment committee

Cllr Mrs J Lovegrove

MUGA and Fryer Field

The MUGA continues to be a popular venue for both adult and youth teams. It is used in the evenings between October and April. Last year I reported that vandalism had decreased. Sadly, I cannot report the same this year. We have seen a marked increase in vandalism, especially the MUGA, which has been subjected to the majority. The floodlight box was targeted early in the season. However, with an investment of almost £1000, a new vandal proof control box was installed which so far has proved successful in deterring vandals.

We have installed CCTV cameras at Fryer Field in order to increase security. This has enabled Police to visit local youths and we are hopeful that with an additional camera we will once again see a reduction in criminal damage to public property.

The fencing at the MUGA, which has come to the end of its natural life, has also been scheduled to be replaced with far superior quality fencing. This will add to the security of the area.

Play Areas

Both Fryer Field and Oakhurst play areas have received rigorous inspections to ensure the equipment is safe. Fryer Field has seen the installation of two new pieces of play equipment, one of which replaced a worn item. The Parish Council remain dedicated to ensuring that the play area continues to be up to date and that it provides a safe, happy environment for the young people of West Moors.

Skate Park

This asset remains very popular and therefore requires safety inspections and maintenance.

BMX Track

The area is being kept clear of weeds, but in main due to poor weather, this area is yet to be fully utilized.

The Pavilion

In partnership with Dulux, who supplied the paint, Parish Councillors, the parish clerk and an East Dorset District Councillor once again gave up their time for the community by painting the Pavilion. This much needed

makeover has brightened up the area which is used by youth and adult football teams throughout the year. It is also used by the community for events such as fun days and football tournaments plus the parish council hold their meetings in the building.

Cemetery

The cemetery continues to be well maintained, with new deer fencing now complete. The cemetery has many visitors and the parish council have received no complaints.

Income from the cemetery has increased this year.

	2012/13	2013/14
Purchase of plots	£4,000	£4,644
Interments	£11,500	£15,496
Memorials	£2,900	£3,794
Total	£18,400	£23,934

Summary

The Environment Committee has remained dedicated to keeping costs down while providing good value for money. It is dedicated to all community members, young and old alike, and strives to be proactive in its achievements.

Finance and General Purpose Committee

Cllr Mrs P Yeo

This committee is responsible for the day-to-day expenditure in the running the Parish Council and also oversees anything not covered by another committee.

Precept (Income)

Last year Central Government changed the way the precept is calculated and this has been continued into this year's calculations. Central Government has tried to mitigate the impact of the reduction in the number of 'paying households' by means of a grant to East Dorset District Council (EDDC) which is then distributed to the towns and parishes within the District. We were warned that this grant would be reduced each year and this has in fact happened. We were therefore left with a decision – should we increase the precept gradually, knowing that the grant would cease within a few years, or should we allow the precept to remain the same at this time, knowing that within a few years we would have to make a very large increase because the grant had been stopped. After several meetings of the Parish Council to discuss this, a slight increase in precept was

agreed so that the Band D rate for the year 2014/15 will be £32.22, an increase of 91p a year.

Expenditure

The Finance and general Purposes Committee is responsible for the expenditure needed to run the council efficiently. This includes insurance, IT support costs, auditors' fees, councillors' and staff training and travel costs, office costs such as electricity, telephone/broadband and water charges and also £6,940 pa loan repayment for the purchase of the Parish Office. As part of its General Purposes remit, the committee also oversees Grants made to community organisations and these amounted to just below £5,800 including £3,300 to the Youth and Community Club. The total expenditure budget for this committee was just over £27,000, with the actual expenditure just over £25,000 for the financial year just ended.

Income

The main source of income is the precept which, together with the grant from EDDC for the year just ending was £103,510. The Parish Council is required to retain financial reserves and these were invested for the twelve months ending in February 2013 in a Scottish Widows One-Year Bond and produced £723.21 interest for the year. We have now invested £50,000 in CCLA a specialist investment management fund for charities, churches and local authorities which we expect will return closer to £2,300 this year (4.6%). This is a long-term investment which satisfies the requirement that we retain a Reserve for emergencies; we hope to be able to leave it safely invested and returning an income but if we should have a major problem within the village we can close the account at less than one-month's notice.

Auditors Report

I am very pleased to report that both the internal and external auditors have again expressed complete satisfaction with the running of the Parish Council during the last financial year.

Dog Worrying Livestock and Trespass

There are increasing numbers of incidents involving dogs not kept under control entering private land and worrying livestock and domestic deer herds. This has included incidents where animals have been badly injured and savaged, having to then be destroyed. Owners are then trespassing on private land in order to locate their dog. Land owners are even facing abuse from dog owners when challenged regarding the out of control dog.

Dog owners need to be aware of their legal obligation to keep dogs under control at all times. Owners could face criminal proceedings for criminal damage and public order in these incidents as well as civil trespass proceedings by landowners. If a dog is caught savaging animals, the landowner as a last resort is entitled to shoot an out of control dog in order to protect livestock.

Please bear this in mind when walking your dog on the Castleman Trailway and within West Moors Plantation. There is also the obvious risk to cyclists and children when a dog is not kept under proper control in these areas. The majority of dog owners are responsible and exercise sound judgment in controlling their dog however a minority are allowing dogs to run out of control causing danger and problems for others. Please remember your responsibilities as a dog owner so that everyone can enjoy the area safely.

Parking Matters

The parish council would like to remind residents that parking on the 'SCHOOL' road markings outside St Marys First School is not acceptable behaviour and sets a very bad example to the local children. This problem is not confined to parents dropping off their children at school but also to visitors to St Marys Church who regularly park on the double yellow lines outside the church, they have even been known to block the dropped kerb so wheelchair users had to go up the road before they are able to cross.

Please park considerably and abide by the parking regulations to ensure West Moors is a vehicle and pedestrian friendly village.

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'WORKING FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD'

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Condolences

West Moors Parish Council sends their condolences to the family and friends of former parish councillor and local resident Miss Judith Church who sadly passed away in March 2014.

