

## **West Moors Annual Town Assembly Report**

Thank you to all members of public joining us tonight

West Moors Town Council was 70 years old on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2026 and we are sure many residents have seen lots of changes over the years, and we look forward to continuing to serve this wonderful community for many more years.

We just wanted to let you all know a few things that the Town Council have done in the past 12 months.

Cllr Mrs Rita Burke has continued to be our chair in 2025/26.

The Leader of Dorset Council Cllr Nick Ireland attended a meeting of the Town Council in August, and it is hoped that he will be coming to another meeting later in 2026.

We have continued to hold bi-monthly litter picks with a great group of volunteers who come out in all weathers to help keep West Moors clean and tidy. Thanks to Nadine in the office for organising these.

Sadly, it has been decided to not continue opening the council office on a Saturday morning, due to the lack of interest in this service.

The Community Speed Watch Initiative is still going strong and continues to try and keep the roads in West Moors safe. In 2025 the volunteers held 71 sessions, counted 41674 vehicles and recorded 554 vehicles speeding. The highest speed they logged was 62mph in Pinehurst Road between 7pm and 8pm on 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> August.

The speedwatch team has noticed that the average speed has reduced at the locations they monitor.

The team are always looking for more volunteers, so if you would like to help out please do come and have a chat.

The Police road safety camera team also come to West Moors occasionally with the enforcement camera.

The Park Way car park EV chargers were sadly vandalised in February with the charging cables stolen.

We continue to operate the public toilets at Park Way, this is very costly, and the facility is often misused, creating additional expenditure. We have carried

out upgrades to some plumbing to try and keep the facility in a reasonable condition for users.

We have seen an exceptional amount of rain this year, creating lots of flooding issues around West Moors, the main one that affected lots of people was in Station Road near the A31. We have worked closely with Dorset Council highways team to try and get these issues resolved. Dorset Council will be carrying out some works in the area over the coming months to try and help the situation, but the area will always be prone to flooding due to it being low lying, but it is hoped that the works will help to ensure the area drains away quicker.

The rain has also had a huge impact on the Fryer Field, thus no football matches could be held for 6 weeks.

The use of the football pitches and the Artificial Grass pitch has generated just over £22,000 income in the financial year April 25 to March 2026.

The allotments located at Gulliver's Farm continue to be successful, we still hold a long waiting list of people who would like to 'grow their own'.

A special event was held on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025 last year to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE-Day, a free fish and chip lunch was provided along with old time singers for 60 residents in Pinehurst Community Church.

We had a great Westival in 2025 and are looking forward to another one on the 11<sup>th</sup> July this year. So please put this date in your diary and come along to listen to the band, check out the stalls and enjoy the entertainment all for free. We are always on the lookout for volunteers, so if you could spare an hour please do let us know.

The annual Remembrance Day Parade was well attended with residents showing their support for all to those who have served even though it was raining. The West Moors scouts decorated the Petwyn with hundreds of knitted poppies, they did an incredible job.

We once again saw the lovely Christmas lights from December along Station Road with the added addition of another tree sparkling on the Petwyn as well as the Christmas tree at the Pinehurst Road shops, thanks once again to Root66 Barbers for allowing us to put the tree on their land.

The Council's Christmas card competition was won by Ellie May Vickers who drew a magical tree, cards were printed and sent out, we hope bringing a smile to all those who received them.

The Youth Club held their annual Carols on the Petwyn event, which saw families enjoying themselves and getting in the festive spirit.

The councillors donated a hamper and selection boxes to the Castleman Community Larder at Christmas to be distributed to those in need.

Two new lovely butterfly and bee benches have been installed on the Petwyn for residents to enjoy for many years to come.

We have carried out some work in the cemetery, planting a yew hedge that should grow up and look lovely in a few years and installing new noticeboards.

We initiated a Seasonal Photographic Competition, to help celebrate the wonderful environment we live in. The autumn and winter seasons saw flurry of great photos, which were displayed in the council office and the library, so get your camera out and send us your pictures of West Moors.

Our Planning consultative committee continues to look at planning applications and make representation to Dorset Council, who are the planning authority. Since April 2025 the committee have looked at 30 applications (this is quite a reduction from the previous year), have objected to one, which Dorset Council has not yet made a decision on.

The Town Council finances are in good shape but as with everything we have had to put up our budget to accommodate increases in costs. If you live in a Band D household, the cost you pay to the Town Council is £79.67 a year, this is £1.53 per week towards the Town Council and the services we provide. We have an infographic showing how our budget is spent, so please do take a look at it. There is also lots of financial information on the Town Council website.

All our accounts can be inspected if you wish, just make an appointment with the Town Clerk.

We financially support the youth club with a grant of up to £20,000 and they have put the funds to good use, by upgrading the computer area, redecorating and adding new sofas and bean bags, making the sports hall safer, and creating a nicer outside space with planters for growing vegies and flowers.

We have also awarded grants in the past 12 months to Home Start Wessex, Citizens Advice, West Moors Dementia Action Group, Sturts Farm, The Memorial Hall and the Memorial Bowls Club, who all support residents of West Moors in various ways. Also, a one-off grant was awarded to Lola Smith to help her travel to India to address period poverty in the region, Lola is an amazing advocate for West Moors.

The Citizens Advice Bus still visits West Moors every Tuesday, you can find it in the Park Way car park from 1pm to 3pm. This service is invaluable to lots of residents.

The Council after surveying residents adopted a Strategic Plan, a copy of which is available on the council's website. It highlights areas that the council wish to focus on during the next 5 years.

Our regular e- newsletter now reaches the inbox of over 500 people in West Moors, if you would like to sign up please scan the QR codes around the hall or sign up via our website.

Unfortunately, we still receive a lot of complaints about dog mess around West Moors, this issue is very difficult to deal with as Dorset Council does not have the enforcement staff available to make regular patrols, and the Town Council does not employ any enforcement staff, we do however on occasions highlight dog mess on the footpaths by spraying it blue in the hope that the irresponsible dog owner will notice what they have done.

We welcome any comments or areas you would like the council to consider, so please do talk to us.

### **Plans for 2026/27**

Our first big event of the year will be our first ever Fun Run on May 10<sup>th</sup>. We are inviting people of all ages and abilities to run 5 or 10k on a route marked out in and around Fryer Field. As part of the fun run we are trying to encourage people to realise the importance of bees in our environment, so all participants will be receiving some wildflower seeds to plant. You can sign up on our website and all monies raised will be shared between The Vine youth club and the Castleman Community Larder.

As previously mentioned, we are looking forward to Westival on the 11<sup>th</sup> July this year, with a few different attractions this year, but look forward to the return of the Birds of Prey and a larger than normal stunt bike display as well as

live music from Audio All Stars, food, kids' activities including a climbing wall and caving experience, Krazy Kev, a display from Phoenix Aerial and a craft tent, we already have over 90 vehicles registered for the Motors and More display.

Please do come along and enjoy what West Moors has to offer and if you can spare an hour to volunteer please do let us know.

We have an afternoon tea event planned on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June to celebrate all the wonderful people in West Moors who volunteer their time to help others. Invitations to this event will be sent out late April.

We hope to receive some additional land during 2026 that currently belongs to Dorset Council, this includes the area known as The Spinney, greenspace at the end of Weavers Close and land behind Fryer Field, including Hatchard Copse.

We are extremely hopeful that after years of waiting that a pedestrian crossing will be installed on Station Road near the St Marys School, we have campaigning for this for many years and very much look forward to the road safety it will bring to children attending St Marys school, as well as users of the Castleman Trailway.

We are currently in the process of procuring a new refreshed website which will hope will be more engaging and easier for everyone to use.

We are also very hopeful that a Men's Shed will be up and running in 2026, thanks to collaboration between the Memorial Hall and the men's shed volunteers. This organisation encourages people to come together to make, repair and repurpose, supporting projects in their local communities. Improving wellbeing, reducing loneliness and combatting social isolation. Representatives are here tonight, so if you'd like to find out more, catch them before you leave.

Do continue to enter your lovely photographs into the seasonal photographic competition, we are looking forward to seeing your spring and summer pictures.

Your Council continues to strive to maintain high standards of transparency and professional, with staff and councillors attending regular training.

