

## **CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT – Cllr Mike Hawkes**

An annual Report presents the opportunity to inform you of what the Council has been doing along with what activities and events that have taken place over this last year. We are completely transparent.

I would like to begin with a foreword in relation to the current, and very unusual, situation we all find ourselves experiencing.

From my own observations along with comments I have received from others, it would appear that the community of West Moors has responded incredibly well with the vast majority of residents adhering to the isolation and social distance recommendations. Well done West Moors.

We have also seen and experienced a great spirit of selfless behaviour and comradeship. So, on behalf of West Moors Town Council I would like to say thank you to all those that have volunteered to help others: Pinehurst Community Church, St Mary's Church and many more, for coordinating volunteer initiatives.

I would also like to say thank on behalf of the Town Council to all those providing care for others within the community along with the staff of local businesses and services that have stayed operating in order to serve the residents of West Moors.

In light of this unprecedented situation, upcoming events have been cancelled.

**WESTIVAL** 2020 will be postponed till 2021. Same weekend of July though. So, let's be positive and put it in our diaries.

**VE DAY** celebrations – May 8<sup>th</sup> at West Moors Memorial Hall- This is a profound date to remember and one that should be commemorated in style. Well that was the Council's plan anyway. The event was nearly sold out.

The May bank holiday has been changed to Friday May 8<sup>th</sup> and declared a special public holiday, so people can celebrate over a long weekend, the 75<sup>th</sup> year since Winston Churchill announced to the nation the ending of hostilities against Nazi Germany and their defeat.

West Moors Town Council, in conjunction with St Mary's Church and the Royal British Legion (Ferndown Branch) had a wonderful day planned:

A short Civic Service would have been held at St.Mary's Church led by Rev Andy Muckle followed by celebrations at the Memorial Hall:

Raising of a glass to take part in The Nation's Toast to the Heroes of WW2 , A Cry for Peace Around the World, Bells ring out calling us to wake, to pray, to work, to arms, to feast, to celebrate and, in times of crisis, to come together.

Last but not least - Simply celebrations – prosecco, tea & coffee, scones, jam & cream & sandwiches

Ferndown Concert Brass Band and Susie Kimber vintage singer to entertain.

At the party, there was going to be an exhibition board displaying various quotes and poems.

The local care homes in the village were kind enough to allow us to visit their residents to ask what memories they had of VE Day 1945. Some of the stories – and jokes – told about May 8<sup>th</sup> 1945 were all unique and inspiring. There is a Special Edition newsletter that has recently been posted on Facebook inspired by VE Day.

Here you will be able to see the quotes, poems and speeches paying tribute to the end of World War II.

In addition to this newsletter, the Council are hosting a Challenge initiative, inviting the community to be involved in VE Day too. A piece of writing, a picture or anything similar inspired by VE day to be submitted via email or post by Weds 6<sup>th</sup> May. The winning entry will be included in the next Council Newsletter and announced on Facebook.

I will also be laying a wreath at the War Memorial on the Petwyn, on Friday, on behalf of the Council.

So, at the March 2019 Annual Public meeting, there was a presentation to explain the upcoming Local Government Reform.

From 1 April 2019 the county's nine councils were replaced by two entirely new organisations:

Dorset Council, and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council.

The new Dorset Council has replaced the existing district and borough councils (East Dorset, North Dorset, Purbeck, West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland) and Dorset County Council, all of which no longer exist. Dorset Council delivers your local services, working in partnership with parish and town councils.

Since this merge, the West Moors Town Council have developed a strong and productive working relationship with Dorset Council. Our Highways Officers are extremely efficient in responding to queries that residents pass to the office. (All advisories/queries are dealt with within 48 hours and where possible and if a contact is left, a progress status is provided to the complainant).

Due to legal paperwork, the Transfer of Assets due to be complete last year has not happened yet.

The Park Way car park and public toilets, the land behind Fryer Field and Brook View are all due to become the responsibility of West Moors Town Council.

Since 2019, we ourselves have undergone some changes:

- Since March last year we have said goodbye to some long standing, still missed Councillors

We have welcomed 6 new members during the past 12 months and we are proud to say we have a full team of 12 representing West Moors.

- The name of the Council has changed from Parish to Town. The structure and services provided remain as efficient and ever improving. The village feel will always shine through as we have seen during this current pandemic.

West Moors Town Council continue to offer financial support to individuals and organisations across the community through Awards and Grants on a discretionary basis. Cllr Keith Wilkes will expand on these.

The most significant though:

#### Jean Ware Legacy Award 2019/20

The Jean Ware Legacy Award is an annual award in the form of a trophy and a cash grant of £1,000

The purpose of the award is to recognise and honour the outstanding performance and achievement of a young person from West Moors who excel in their chosen field.

This year's recipient was Lorna Ross, who is pursuing a career in dancing. Lorna started dancing at 7 years old, falling in love with it instantly. Exams were taken annually under ISTD (Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing). Reaching a high level in 'Rock 'n' Roll' and 'Freestyle' has enabled Lorna to participate in carnivals, shows and work with younger dancers at DH Dance School. After studying GCSE Dance, Lorna has progressed onto BTEC Dance at Brockenhurst College along with two other A levels. Dance is her passion. Her aim is to be a Choreographer or a professional contemporary performer. To be able to achieve a degree in Dance she must attend auditions in London for which costs are high. There will be travel, one to one lessons, workshop and theatre production and costume costs. All this will enhance her choreography skills as well as providing a splendid qualification.

### Apprentice Vocational Training Grant 2019/20

Financial help is available to young people in apprenticeships or vocational training to help meet some of the cost of tools and essential equipment to their course. Unfortunately, since the 2018/2019 awards, the Council have not received any more applications. If you know of anyone who is a resident of the village and might benefit from our help, please pass on the word. Details can be obtained online at [www.westmoors-pc.gov.uk](http://www.westmoors-pc.gov.uk)

### Good Citizen Award 2020

In June 2019, West Moors Council members implemented a 'Good Citizen Award' for West Moors where an individual or group is formally recognised for their service to the Community.

There were no Junior Good Citizen nominations received but there were four for the Adult Citizen (18+) category.

A panel of three councillors met in early March and reviewed all applications. We are pleased to announce the winner was Mrs Moya Botterill. For nearly 30 years, Moya has acted as a fund raiser, non-profit club organiser, volunteer on various charities and a very good friend to many.

The other 3 nominees were (in no particular order);

1. Mr Martin Rowley (resident of West Moors and dedicated, proactive website monitor for local organisations and West Moors Council)
2. Mr Malcolm Adam (resident of West Moors and dedicated Volunteer Litter Warden for West Moors Council)
3. Mrs Angela McVeigh (West Moors Library Manager)

Mrs Botterill will receive a small trophy and certificate and the three nominees will each receive a recognition certificate.

It was the intention to carry out the presentations at the Annual Public Meeting. Therefore, it is hoped that when practices return to normal, the next Full Council meeting that takes place at The Pavilion, Fryer Field, will include this presentation. In the interim, the winner and nominees will receive their certificates by post.

West Moors Town Council congratulate them all and thank them for being a wonderful example to society.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all fellow Councillors for all their input throughout the year on various committees and projects that we are all involved with. My thanks also go to Judi, our Clerk, who guides and works so professionally for the Council's benefit, as well as Amie her Assistant who does a wonderful job supporting her and the Council.

## **Annual Finance & General Purposes Committee Report** **Chair - Cllr Keith Wilkes**

This Committee currently has seven members and has two main functions as you will have guessed from the title. It oversees the Council's finances and it ensures that all Council's policies and procedures are up to date, in order to ensure efficient, effective and lawful management of the Council. Since October 2017 it has also had responsibility for the Council's employed staff.

I am pleased to be able to confirm that the Council is solvent with reserves which conform to legal requirements and with earmarked funds to support our future plans. These earmarked funds include monies for repairing or replacing such things as MUGA replacement grass, cemetery space, Skate Park Project, Christmas Lights and play equipment.

We get the majority of our money from the Precept which is another name for part of your Council Tax. The Precept has been increased this year to £146,383, which results in a Band D rate of £47.45 a year or just under £3.95p a month. We also receive income:

- Fryers Field – football pitches; MUGA; Pavilion and field hire - £14146.97 (2018-19 - £11897)
- Cemetery - £16,900 (2018-19 - £11,238)
- Food and Dog waste Bag sales - £4,876 (2018-19 - £4642).

Interest from monies we have invested in the CCLA (Churches, Charities and Local Authorities) Fund which to April of this year has paid us £4609.09

Income is used to support the upkeep of the play areas, cemetery and football pitches and we also make regular Awards and Grants to:

- Jean Ware Legacy award £1,000 (once a year)
- Apprentice Scheme (£250 up to 4 times a year)
- West Moors Memorial Hall for the upkeep for their car park (£500)
- The Royal British Legion Ferndown Poppy Appeal (£100)
- West Moors Youth and Community Club – a grant of £3300 each year towards the Club and its facilities and a further grant of £10000 towards the salary of the youth leader who is not funded by Dorset Council. The West Moors Youth Club continues to support about 45 of our young people each week.

We also engage with the wider community by recognising volunteering and activity such as:

- Referral Agent for Ringwood Food Bank
- Annual Christmas Card & Best Dressed Shop Window Competitions
- Good Citizen Award
- East Dorset Environment Partnership – by application
- East Dorset Citizens Advice Bureau (Section 142) - by application.

Groups seeking grants, awards and support for their activities should contact the Council.

As the Chair has already told you, the Jean Ware Legacy Award was this year presented to Lorna Ross whose chosen career is dance. She is studying BTEC Dance at Brockenhurst College along with two other A Levels. Lorna's aim is to be a Choreographer or a professional contemporary performer.

There were no applications for the Apprentice Scheme Vocational award in 2019-20. We do so hope to receive some this year. Please spread the word that we are here to help.

Your Council is audited annually by internal and external auditors who audit accounts but also check all processes and protocols to ensure the Council operates professionally and in accordance with relevant laws and regulations. I am very pleased to be able to confirm that both auditors have expressed their satisfaction with our records and procedures. This reflects the continued excellent work of our Clerk Judi Weedon and great thanks go to our staff. In all that the Council does, or plans to do, every consideration is given to ensuring value for money, sound and open governance and providing facilities to meet the needs and aspirations of our residents.

The Council is a member of the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils and Councillors attend both the Eastern Area meetings and the county-wide Towns and Larger Parishes meetings. Our Clerk is part of the SLCC and we participate fully with other professionals and organisations as to ensure we offer a qualified through service to our electors.

## **Annual Environment Committee Report – Vice Chair – Cllr Carol Holmes**

The Environment Committee is concerned with the Town's environment as a whole including the assets owned by the Town Council. These include seats, bus shelters, fences and stiles plus our key and most visible assets such as the Petwyn, War Memorial, Fryer Field, the Cemetery, and the Allotments at Gulliver's Farm.

### **Climate Emergency**

I am going to start my report on the most important aspect of what your council is trying to do to protect our local environment.

This year our Chairman Cllr Mike Hawkes initiated efforts to have the council declare a 'CLIMATE EMERGENCY'. This means that we will strive lower our carbon footprint within the council's sphere of operations. We have used Dorset Council's criteria for measuring the carbon footprint we produce within the council - Electricity use by us is the highest area of consumption. In order to reduce our usage, we are investigating the use of solar panels on the pavilion using a 40% government grant scheme.

Planting trees is a great way to reduce our footprint and we have work in progress to plant numerous saplings on our land at the right time with the help of the Woodland Trust. West Moors Scouts, Cubs, Beavers and their carers want to participate in planting & nurturing these green lungs.

Another way we are trying to reduce our carbon footprint locally is by involving residents in a council sponsored hanging basket competition this summer.

The competition may include Best Front Garden and is open to West Moors residents only. Sue Hamlett and West Moors Horticultural Society have kindly agreed to organise this new initiative and we thank them so very much for their part in working towards a low carbon West Moors. Prizes will be donated by the council.

Using less paper is another of our objectives.

You can play your part by planting more trees, cutting out single use plastics, making do & mending your clothes and car sharing.

## **PETWYN**

As a lasting commemoration of the ending of the First World War we bought two 'Lest We Forget' benches from the Poppy Appeal organisation. A brief service of dedication was held in late October, in readiness for Remembrance Day.

We again arranged for the cleaning and repair of the War Memorial to ensure that those who come to our very well-attended Service of Remembrance could see that we take a pride in our community and maintaining our monuments in good condition.

For Christmas, we were able to add to the lights in the trees on the Petwyn, we hope you have enjoyed seeing them over the festive period. They were FANTASTIC.

## **FRYER FIELD**

This is our sports area, with two full-size and one youth-size pitch and, as many of you will know, it is in constant use throughout the season by adults and younger children. Several teams use it, and it is "home" to Grange Football Club who once used it again to run their annual football tournament in June.

## **MUGA**

Also, in constant use throughout the season is our Multi-Use Games Area where sports people of all ages can be seen, in all weathers, training and enjoying themselves on our floodlit pitch.

## **TENNIS**

Alongside the Multi-Use Games Area are two tennis courts, which are available for anyone to use free of charge.

## **SKATEPARK**

Close to the tennis courts is the Skate Park. This has been one of our major assets for many years and is in constant use. It underwent some repair and maintenance in October 2019 and we have received a Grant from the National Lottery to help us consult you all on whether

we should improve this skate park, and if so, how. The initial consultation was conducted across a wide age range of people via questionnaires and a very enjoyable Skate Park Party where pizzas, music, demonstrations, and a free raffle were enjoyed by everyone who attended----- in the RAIN! GREAT FUN with a purpose. Funding is being sought from a wide range of grant making bodies.

Five companies submitted tender documents to bid for the work and after rigorous comparisons against government guidelines CANVAS SPACES Ltd based in Bristol were awarded the contract. Their design incorporates features asked for by our young people, seating for those who like to watch and three areas of graded difficulty for all levels of ability. There will continue to be ongoing consultation with the public during the build. Work is to be completed before the close of 2021.

### **BMX**

Just behind the skatepark is the BMX track. This has had a varied history, in fact it almost ceased to exist until earlier this year when a group of enthusiasts took it over and are repairing and improving it to bring it back to a modern, safe and usable standard. We thank Mr Cadman and Mr Daly for their time and effort which is being given free of charge. The council are partially funding the infrastructure.

### **PLAY AREAS**

The children's play areas at Oakhurst School and on Fryer Field were both completely renovated within recent years and now require only occasional maintenance. We have been given two picnic benches which have been placed close to the Fryer Field play area, and we thank our anonymous donor for their generosity.

### **WESTIVAL**

This was organised by the council in July last year. It was an even greater success than the previous year. We thank all our volunteers who gave time and support on the day and during the weeks leading up to it. Over 1,000 people attended at some time during that day and we were able to donate to the Amelia's Rainbow.

SADLY, we are not able to hold this year's WESTIVAL due to Government instructions. We will make next year bigger and better.

### **CEMETERY**

Sadly, the much loved Lych Gate at the entrance to the cemetery had to be removed for safety reasons and replaced with new metal gates to keep the costs down.

The cemetery has been here for very many decades and we continue to improve it each year. We pay for regular safety tests on headstones. We are concerned about future space and are already beginning to consider what to do when the cemetery is full, which may be in about 20 years. We are considering all options on this topic.

The on-going problem with a badger sett in the far corner of the Cemetery has not yet been resolved and unfortunately the badgers have caused some damage since last year. The committee commissioned a report from a licenced specialist, but it is not clear how to proceed as badgers are a protected species. Extra land provided if they ever leave will still take several years before it can be used for burials.

### **ALLOTMENTS**

The allotments have proved to be a great success and we have leased 39 plots of varying sizes, and still have a waiting list of 37 keen gardeners looking forward to their chance to

make use of the excellent organic soil. We have recently been able to provide a couple raised beds, which are already occupied. The Allotment Holders have their own Association with a committee and a Facebook page. We have asked Sturt's Farm if they might have more land to offer for further allotments. Cllr Senior is the council's representative at the Allotment Holders Association.

## **GENERAL**

On March 28th there was a planned Town Spring Clean which had to be cancelled.

On this subject we thank Mr Malcolm Adams, the community litter warden who carry out litter picks on a regular basis and monitor areas of concern locally, sometimes telling Judi and Amie in the office when there are problems. We are aware that other people also litter pick or look after our town in different ways and we sincerely thank you all. If you do find areas within the town that need fixing, potholes in roads, footpaths, overhanging brambles or unpleasant graffiti, do please call the office where Judi or Amie will be happy to arrange for it to be dealt with.

That concludes the Environment Committee Report.

Thank you.

## **Annual Planning Consultative Committee Report** **Chairman - Cllr Colin Way**

There are nine members on this committee which, being Consultative only, does not make a decision but can and does send comments to Dorset Council (DC).

For 2019-2020 14 meetings were scheduled although if there are no applications to look at some meetings are cancelled. Approximately one week before the meeting all committee members are provided with an agenda which sets out the applications to be considered to allow them time to study them and visit the sites. We are only able to view properties from the pavement as we have no powers to enter onto a site.

The meeting agenda gives details of the application number which can then be viewed on the DC website portal. For more complex applications such as Blackfield Farm more detailed documentation is sometimes provided.

Members of the public are welcomed to attend any planning meeting to observe and if they wish to comment upon a particular application there is a 10 minute timeslot available at the start of each meeting for this to happen. The meetings are held in the Pavilion adjacent to Fryers field and usually start at 7.00pm. Details of forthcoming meeting can be found on our website. If you wish to attend a meeting it would be helpful if you contact Amie the assistant to the clerk few days before a scheduled meeting to confirm time and venue.

The planning portal can be found at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/home.aspx> ; select Search for a planning application; select East Dorset; accept the copywrite disclaimer; enter the address or planning number.

With two noticeable exceptions it has been a relatively quiet year for applications and since the Annual Parish Meeting in March 2019 the committee has looked at 32 applications which is just over half the number in the previous year.

We raised objections to 4 of these applications, of these 2 were subsequently passed by DC and 2 were withdrawn.

No Tree Preservation Orders have been made this year, but there have been a number of orders granted for tree works.

### **The Dorset Plan**

At a recent meeting I attended along with Councillors from other parishes and town councils where representatives of the DC were present. There was a consensus of opinion that Town and Parish councils should have a greater say in what happens in their area because of the loss of some local knowledge that resulted from the recent amalgamation of Dorset District Councils. Any change from the current system will need an act of parliament so unlikely to happen any time soon.

As you may be aware Dorset Council are in the process of creating a five year plan and a key element of that plan is how to meet the Government targets for new homes. The figures we have been given are 4,400 a year for Dorset as a whole split between 2,600 in the BCP area and 1,800 for the rest of Dorset. As part of the plan all towns and villages have been given a classification with West Moors being classified as a type 2 town. The significance of this is twofold; firstly if the BCP area cannot meet its target the shortfall will have to be made up by the rest of Dorset and secondly that shortfall is to be made up by development within all towns within Dorset. Small villages will be treated differently with need having a higher priority when considering their suitability for development

### **Blackfield Farm**

Many of you will remember, we had nearly 200 people attend the planning meeting back in August last year, when this application was discussed, for which the weather was fortunately kind to us as we held the meeting on Fryer Field! We do thank everyone for their passion and patience that evening!

Following this the application was withdrawn before it could be considered by Dorset Council.

At the applicants request the Council agreed to meet with them prior to the start of 27<sup>th</sup> February of the Full Council where they presented a revised plan. It was explained to them that we were not in a position to take this to residents on their behalf and suggested that they organise a public presentation to get feedback from residents. To date this has not happened and it would seem that the revised plan has not yet been formally submitted to Dorset Council for approval. In view of the current Covid-19 crisis it is unlikely that there will be any further activity on this for a few months.

The date for our next meeting has not been confirmed due to the government restrictions. The Council are in the process of arranging virtual remote meetings so council members and the public can attend via a social media app.

Please check our website and Facebook for updates on this.