

WEST MOORS PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** held on Thursday 22nd April 2010 at The Pavilion, Fryer Field, West Moors at 7.00pm.

PRESENT:

Cllr P Holden - Chairman		
Cllr. J M Price – Vice Chairman		
Cllr J Bartley	Cllr Miss J Church	Cllr Ms S Edwards
Cllr Mrs C Holmes	Cllr Mrs A Peskett	Cllr Mrs J Ware
Cllr Mrs P Yeo	Cllr. Ms S. Zyga	

OTHERS PRESENT: Ms. J. Weedon (Clerk)
 Mrs P. Holloway (Assistant Clerk)
 Dorset County Councillor – Peter Finney
 East Dorset District Councillor – Alex Clarke
 4 members of the public

APOLOGIES: Cllr R Long

Absent without apologies: Cllr Mrs M Hall

1 SIGNING OF APPROVED MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on 23rd April 2009

Having been circulated and previously approved as a true and correct record at the meeting of the Parish Council on the 28th May 2009 Minute no 09/010, the minutes were signed by the Chairman.

2 Matters Arising for information

Mrs A Pogson stated that her recollection of the meeting was different from that minuted in regard to the Memorial Hall car park (minute no. 5a).

Mrs Pogson was informed that the minutes had already been approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.

Mrs Pogson stated that she thought that work to help clear the Memorial Hall car park would be carried out as a good will gesture by the Parish Council. The Chairman of the Parish Council informed those present that the work carried out by the lengersman in clearing the scrub area was carried out as a good will gesture by the Parish Council. The Parish Council then gave a grant of £350 to the Memorial Hall to help towards the upkeep of the car park.

A discussion ensued regarding the approval of Annual Parish meeting minutes and when this should take place. Cllr Price suggested that an item should be raised on a future Parish Council agenda to discuss how the Parish Council approves the Annual Public meeting minutes.

3 CHAIRMANS REPORT – Cllr Pete Holden

This has been a year of considerable change at the Parish Council. Unfortunately Councillors Alex Clarke, Barry Wye, Mike Shine, Stephen Walker, Phillip Gaussen, Ray Watson, Ken Warren and John Young have left the Council, and we thank them for the excellent service and valuable contribution each made during their tenure.

We have since been joined by five new West Moors residents: Councillors Penny Yeo, Jean Ware, Angela Peskett, Roger Long and Shân Edwards, who have all made such an energetic and positive impact.

Special thanks go to all our staff for their hard work, sometimes beyond the call of duty, in making the Council run smoothly and efficiently and maintaining Fryer Field, the Cemetery, the Petwyn and other facilities in such good condition.

I took over as Chairman in November 2009 and the first priority was setting the budget for 2010 / 2011. A previous audit had raised a concern that our reserve funds were too low and that this needed addressing. Added to this were other matters, particularly the large number of trees owned by the Council and any replacing of equipment in the Children's Play Areas. Neither had specific budgetary consideration and expenditure largely came out of reserves. Sinking funds have now been set up that will, in time, readdress this situation and solve the problem.

The last year has seen the Parish Council continue the planned work toward improving its facilities and services. These plans include enhancements to the Petwyn and the Cemetery, and improved sports, play and recreational facilities at Fryer Field.

The Carols on the Petwyn event was, as usual, a great success. I had the honour of presenting prizes to the winner and runners-up in the Council's competition for schoolchildren to design a new Christmas street light. This competition is part sponsored by many local businesses.

Many of the old Christmas street lights are malfunctioning and this was a cause of some criticism, as they are looking old and tired but, through a brilliant piece of negotiation, our assistant clerk, Pauline Holloway, secured a deal that means we now have new lights for next Christmas.

Sadly, over the Christmas period the Council's garage at Fryer Field was broken into twice. Nothing of particular value was stolen, there's nothing of value in it but damage was caused that needed repair.

The Council's bus shelters now have timetables for the new No. 29 Yellow Bus to Bournemouth. This bus is a very welcomed addition to the West Moors bus services. It is not supported by any tax-payers' money, so for it to be successful and remain here, it needs to be used.

Also this year a working party was created to assess all the Council's assets and areas of responsibility. A three year business plan is currently being drawn up and it is intended that this will be in place for the financial year 2011 / 2012.

Various ideas and initiatives are also being considered for the future, which will have significant impact on the Parish Council: for example, the Parish Office that is, at present, a portacabin next to the Library. It has no running water or toilet facilities. It does not have disabled access and often the infirm find the steps to it difficult to negotiate. As a structure it is far from being either an ideal place for employment or for village residents to access. Several options are possible, including buying or renting one of the shops in West Moors, extending the Library, relocating to the Pavilion, etc.

Another issue is the demand for allotments. This has been looked into for the last eighteen months. Following an extensive investigation a piece of land has been made, in principle, available by East Dorset District Council but there are questions over its suitability. Although West Moors is almost entirely surrounded by fields, the appropriateness and availability of land for allotments is very limited.

Both of the above matters would involve substantial financial commitment on the part of the Parish Council. As a consequence of this the Council is looking into ways that money can be raised other than a charge to the tax-payer.

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

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COMMITTEE REPORTS**a) Finance and General Purpose Committee – Chairman Cllr Pete Holden**

This committee has two main responsibilities, firstly to oversee the day-to-day management of the Parish Council's financial situation, and secondly to deal with any other matters not covered by the other committees.

This committee examines and scrutinises the budget proposals from the other committees as well as its own responsibilities, which include staff salaries, office costs and grants to groups and organisations. It is this committee that then recommends to the Full Parish Council, for its approval, the budget for the next financial year.

In the light of the current national financial situation the main driving force this last year has been toward greater efficiency and better use of the Parish's resources.

There was also a criticism from the auditor that the Parish's reserves were too low and remedial steps needed to be taken. There was also a need to renew various items of equipment, including items in the Children's Play Areas and machinery for the Groundsmen. All these taken into consideration resulted in a larger than desired increase in the precept (4.96%) but I believe the Parish Council is now on firmer financial ground.

On the income side, interest returns were well below that previously budgeted for but these were more than compensated for by buoyant refuse bag sales and grants. The Parish Council ended the year with a balance on the budgeted figure of over £11,000 in our favour.

On the expenditure side, there was an over spend on staff salaries, which has been an on-going problem for a few years. Steps have been taken in the budget to remedy this in the future; as we have also done with the Parish's trees and Children's Play Area equipment.

Plans are being prepared, amongst others, for the possibility of allotments and a new Parish Office. Both these items will incur substantial costs. Grants will be pursued and there are ideas being investigated that may produce more income into the Parish Council. It will, however, be necessary to see these ideas through to completion with the high probability of needing to borrow money. The views of West Moors residents will be sought on these matters when the Parish Council presents a formal plan in the future.

Finally I would like to thank all the Parish Council's staff, in particular the Clerk, Judi Weedon, for their hard work, loyalty and cooperation throughout the year in maintaining an efficient and increasingly active Parish Council.

b) Planning Committee – Chairman Cllr Ms Shân Edwards

I joined the Parish Council in August 2009 and became Chair of the Planning Committee in November 2009. 75 planning applications have been received this year, compared to 73 last year and there has been a balance of approvals and refusals by the committee, and the decisions of the Parish have generally been supported by EDDC.

Several new councillors have joined the planning committee this year and have taken advantage of training sessions offered by EDDC and will continue to keep their knowledge of the regulations up to date.

The Committee aims to make fair and balanced decisions taking into account relevant factors and will continue to make decisions that support the local community. Views of residents who are directly affected by planning applications are taken into account and members of the public are always welcome to attend meetings.

c) Amenities Committee – Chairman Cllr Mrs Carol Holmes

This committee is a very busy one that meets each month to consider and decide on a range matters connected with the management and running of West Moors Parish Councils facilities. It also debates wider environmental issues connected with our locality.

Ten enthusiastic councillors make up this executive committee.

Our aim is to provide good quality parish facilities such as the recently replanted Petwyn village green, the cemetery, play areas and sports facilities including the new Multi Use Games Area on Fryer's Field.

Three working parties have been formed.

One has focused on the acquisition of allotments for the many residents on West Moors Allotment Association's waiting list. This is proving to be very difficult.

The second has been working, in consultation with children at Oakhurst First School and St. Mary's First School, to implement on some improvements to Oakhurst and Fryer's Field play areas. A Birds Nest Swing has been installed at Oakhurst Play Area from our budget and grant aid is being sought from 'Awards for All' for 2 new pieces of play equipment on Fryer's Field.

The third working party has been engaged on the Petwyn Enhancement Project. A stand- pipe has been installed, shrubs planted and thanks to the kindness of West Moors Horticultural Society, spring bulbs have been planted. More work will take place this year to fulfil the design plan chosen by villagers.

We are responsible for making sure that the cemetery is properly maintained, managed and that all legal requirements such as regular headstone safety checks are implemented. Badgers have been expanding their setts in the cemetery and this has been properly controlled according to the law (see separate report in this newsletter)

Along with others, our Footpath Liaison Office has worked closely with Dorset County Council, East Dorset District Council and residents to ensure a satisfactory outcome for the footpath between Arnold Road and Ashurst Road.

We have requested that East Dorset District Council give consideration to the installation of a cycle route from Collingwood Road West Moors to Three Legged Cross in the interests of road safety.

Our two primary schools continue to enjoy participating in our Christmas Street Light Competition – this helps children to contribute to the community and we get great designs from them for us all to enjoy.

We have requested that consideration be given to moving the pedestrian crossing from the old post office to near the library but, after a survey DCC have informed us that its criteria have not been met,

The committee considered proposals put out for consultation by EDDC on Dog Control Orders on Fryer’s Field. It approved the purchase of new tennis nets, new goal posts, electrical works and repairs to the groundsmans garage and the addition of Yellow Bus flags to our bus shelters for the new service to Bournemouth.

Everything we do is on this committee is guided by the need to secure value for money and to apply good housekeeping principals to spending your money for the benefit of all of us who live in this lovely place.

5 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- a) Mrs D Malborough asked if any items in the Parish Plan had been budgeted for in the current financial year. Improved play equipment has been budgeted for and East Dorset have been approached to provide cycle routes. It was noted that that the Parish Plan was still a useful document.
- b) Mrs Holland asked how the new play equipment was selected. She was informed that Oakhurst Community First School and St Mary’s Fist School were both consulted.
- c) Mr Malborough asked PCSO Ben King why the traffic cones outside Tesco express have been removed. PSCO King explained the parking situation.
- d) Mrs Holland asked if the speed camera by the Memorial Hall was working.
- e) Cllr J Bartley stated that the Pinehurst Parade shops access road is in an appalling state of repair and that the Parish Council should do something about it. Cllr Bartley was informed by the Chairman that East Dorset Disttict Council has written to the shop owners on varoius occasions asking for the road to be repaired. The access road is private property and belongs to the shop owners. Cllr Finney agreed to speak to Dorset County Council about the matter.
- f) Those present were informed that there had been two fires in the Plantation recently and that the Police and Fire and Rescue service are working in partnership to try and reslove the problem.
- g) Mrs Holland stated that the village is very clean and tidy and free from litter but dog fouling still posed a big problem in the village.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.27

SIGNED DATE
Chairman