

## Flax Bourton Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting 11th April 2017

### Chairman's Report

#### People

In July Ruth Eager the Parish Council Clerk of 11 years left to take up a full time job. We recruited a new Clerk, Lorna Dukes who started work in August. She has made an immediate and significant impact on the workings of the Parish Council. During the year Councillors Brown and Ogborne retired from the Council with our thanks for their work and support. Councillors Ellis and Buckley have joined the Council bringing fresh energy and help and taking us up to a full compliment. We are always happy to hear from anyone who would like to join the Council or be part of any working groups we form. Vacancies will arise as Councillors wish to retire or reduce their commitments.

#### Communication

The Parish Council has established a Working Group to improve our already successful website. Any resident with an interest will be welcome to join. Residents are encouraged to register with our website 'Keep Informed' service to receive agendas and minutes from the Parish Council. The Parish Council Facebook page continues to receive positive feedback so please 'like' if you haven't already done so. Residents also keep in touch by the Parish Council's monthly report in the Parish Magazine.

#### Finance

The expenditure for the year 2016/17 was well within budget, with net spending at £18,545.87 against a precept of £22,000. This has enabled the Parish Council to maintain healthy General Reserves.

#### Village School

North Somerset Council have continued with plans to enlarge and remodel the village school to increase places permanently from 105 to 210. Consultation closed in October 2016 and North Somerset are making preparations to submit a planning application for the alteration and extension of the school buildings. The Parish Council is very supportive of the enlargement to 210 places from September 2018, however, has requested that during the planning process North Somerset Council should ensure that the concerns of immediately neighbouring residents concerning traffic flow and parking be fully considered.

#### Designated Community Land

As a result of North Somerset Councils plans to expand the village school the Parish Council have been offered the opportunity to lease part of the land adjoining the school which is designated community land. Following a well attended public meeting the Council resolved to continue to negotiate heads of terms with North Somerset Council in the hope of completing a Lease for the use of the land by the community from September 2018. These negotiations continue.

#### Youth Club

The Youth Club continues to be supported by the Parish Council. It receives the largest single annual grant given by the Parish Council which represents approximately one third of the Parish Council's income. The Youth Club's Committee has moved its weekly meetings to the Village Hall as the Youth Club House is no longer fit for purpose.

## Young Villagers

The temperamental roundabout has been repaired at well below the estimated cost of a replacement roundabout. This is thanks to the tireless research and determination of the Parish Council Clerk. The village Toddlers Group continues to meet at the village hall.

## Village Orderly

The Parish Council and the community are grateful to Frank Payne the Village Orderly for his work in keeping the village tidy.

## Stancombe Quarry

The Parish Council continues to be represented on the Quarry Liason Group together with representatives from Barrow Gurney and Backwell. Tarmac has implemented its planning permission to extend the quarry into the Spinney which has triggered the setting up of the Stancombe Quarry Community Fund. A levy on the additional tonnage is placed in a Fund held by North Somerset Council for distribution to projects that improve the lifestyles of the residents in the three parishes. Projects are to have a clear benefit in terms of education, recreation, nature conservation and sustainability. There is approximately £20,000 a year available for projects within the three Parishes and the Parish Council wish to encourage applications from Flax Bourton. Details and links are on the Parish Council website.

## Village Hall

The Village Hall continues to be managed by volunteers through a Community Interest Company. Regular bookings and parties have increased following the changes in the administration and management of bookings and enquiries. As well as being a tremendous asset to the village the Village Hall CIC also invests profits for the benefit of the community.

## Planning

During the year 12 planning applications were submitted to the Parish Council for comment and recommendation. The Parish Council has kept and will continue to keep a close review of the Local Development Plan and the emerging Joint Spatial Plan for implications which may affect Flax Bourton.