

Chairman's Report to the Flax Bourton Annual Parish Meeting 2022

The year started with Covid restrictions still in place and the Parish Council having to meet virtually using Zoom. Virtual meetings proved popular with residents and attracted a regular audience. We have lobbied the government to allow more use of on-line meetings when appropriate.

The main focus of attention for the Parish Council has been working together with the newly formed Flax Bourton Hub group to reopen and run the village hall which had been closed down by the previous operators during the pandemic. A new Charitable Incorporated Organisation was set up with assistance from the parish council and is being run by volunteers from the parish. The hall reopened in April 2021 and has been going from strength to strength. The parish has funded some essential repairs and refurbishments for which it was necessary to raise the parish precept. Revenues for the hall is now such that the need for support from the parish council is significantly reduced.

A further success during the year was to work with North Somerset highways to clear the overgrown pavement between the village and Backwell Farleigh. Hedges were cut back in cooperation with adjacent land owners, and the local authority cleared encroachment of grass over the tarmac pavement. As this path is designated a 'safe route to school' it has been agreed that this section will receive priority attention in future years.

The parish council is still seeking to obtain permission from North Somerset highways for the installation of two "YOUR SPEED IS" display signs at each end of the village, funded by the Parish Council. Although these are used widely throughout North Somerset and in neighbouring authorities, highways have consistently refused to allow the installation of permanent signs on the grounds that this type of sign is only approved for temporary use for a period of two weeks at a time. Approaches have been made to both officers and elected members without success. On a positive note we have managed to include a pedestrian safety survey in this year's highways program.

In conjunction with local residents, agreement has been reached to address flooding issues in Bourton Combe by clearing the ditch alongside and also to improve and extend the existing culvert to better contain flood water and to protect adjacent retaining walls.

The Parish Council has put considerable effort into responding to the consultation on the North Somerset Local Plan, which defines development areas up to 2035. The main threat to our parish is the increase in traffic through the village generated by over 3000 new houses in Nailsea and Backwell together with a new link road bypassing Station Road and crossroads in Backwell.

We are looking to progress the area of community land adjacent to the school which is promised to the Parish Council, however this is currently delayed by protracted negotiations between Network Rail and the local authority. We hope to carry out a consultation exercise to explore the possible future use of this land.

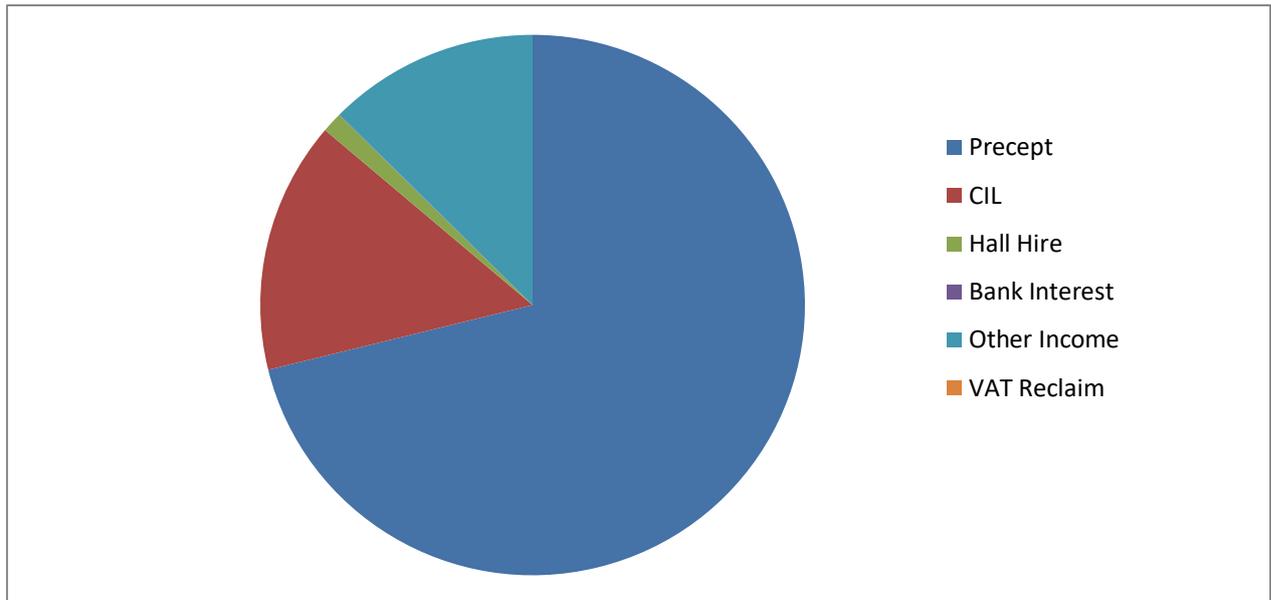
We are exploring the possibility of planting a new copse on the area of land at the end of the Long Ashton bypass with trees provided by the Woodland Trust under the Queens Jubilee green canopy initiative.

We hope to expand the existing email list to enable items of interest in the Parish and events at the Hub to be communicated more effectively to the whole village.

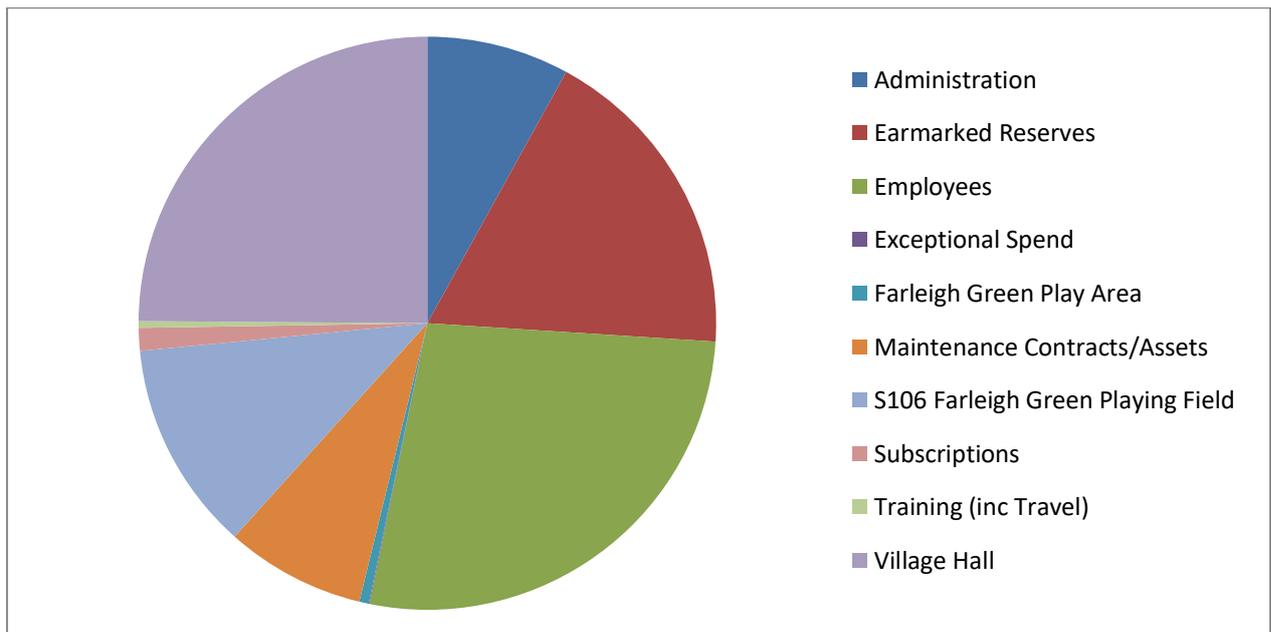
The Parish Council acknowledges the recent grant from the Community Renewal Fund for essential renovations at the Hall and to promote Community Events.

Geoff Coombs, Chairman, May 2022

Receipts



Payments



The Accounts for 2021-22 have been independently audited and approved by the Internal Auditor.

The Precept for 2022-23 has been set and agreed at £28,000, which is less than the previous year.

Annual expenditure has been pretty well in line with the precept with some ring fenced reserves which the Parish Council has to hold for specific projects.

Clare Melton
 Parish Clerk and RFO
 6th May 2022