Chairmans Report to the Flax Bourton Annual Parish Meeting 2023

The Parish Council has met regularly during the year and councillors have attended forums and meetings with North Somerset Council. Meetings are now held on the second Monday each month (except August)in the Hall of the Flax Bourton Primary School.

The Village Hall is now running very successfully as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation under the management of the newly formed Hub group. The Parish Council is very grateful to the volunteers who have regenerated this valuable community asset. The hall is now over 20 years old and there have been expenses during the year to upgrade the heating and electrical installation. We have been fortunate to attract partial grants from the Lottery and the Government Renewal fund.

Together with North Somerset highways we have been reasonably successful in keeping the pavement between the village and Backwell Farleigh clear of undergrowth. Hedges have been cut back in cooperation with adjacent land owners, and the local authority has cut weed growth from the banks. As this path is designated a 'safe route to school', the Parish Council is investigating ways of ensuring more regular attention to this perennial problem.

The parish council continues to seek permission from North Somerset highways for the installation of two "YOUR SPEED IS" display signs at each end of the village. Although these are used widely throughout North Somerset and in neighboring authorities, highways have in the past refused 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. Officers have agreed to reconsider the proposal if an appropriate configuration can be found.

North Somerset Highways are considering the first stage of a pedestrian safety programme for the A370 put forward by the PC and the Road Safety Working Group. This will address the section between the bypass and Charlton Nursery. Additional road crossings, relocation of speed limit signs, extension of the cycleway and additional sections of pavement are being considered. Work is expected to be carried out during the present financial year and the PC has offered a financial contribution.

The exceptional storms again caused serious flooding mainly along the A370. Extensive investigation of the highways drainage revealed that the main culvert opposite Post Office Lane had collapsed in two places. This led to storm

water from the hillside backing up and flooding the carriageway at the western approach to the village. While traffic lights were on site, the team took the opportunity to extensively clean the road gulleys and conduits which were in a poor state. It is hoped that repairs to the main culvert will provide a permanent solution to another perennial problem. Work has also been carried out in Bourton Combe to improve the floodwater ditch and to extend the culvert with a new entrance grating which is hoped to relieve the gulley at the A370 which frequently suffers from covering with debris during storm conditions.

There has been little progress with the area of community land adjacent to the school which is promised to the Parish Council. 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 when matters have been resolved.

A new copse has been planted by volunteers on the area of land at the end of the Long Ashton bypass with trees provided by the Woodland Trust under the late Queens Jubilee green canopy initiative.

We are working on a village communication platform to enable items of interest in the Parish and events at the Hub to be communicated more effectively to the whole village.

We are exploring whether there would be support for a 'healthy walking' program in the parish.

I should like to extend thanks to members of the Parish Council, our Parish Clerk and volunteers who have a valuable contribution to our community. Following the recent elections there are two places on the council fund we are seeking volunteers to join the council by cooption.

Geoff Coombs
Chair of Council