Chairman's Report to the Flax Bourton Annual Parish Meeting 2024

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

The Parish Council has worked closely during the year with North Somerset Highways on the two main issues for the Parish, flooding and road safety.

The serious flooding of the A370 at the corner of Post Office Lane and Angel Cottages was found to be caused by the collapse of a main culvert carrying storm water from the hillside. Temporary diversion of the culvert into the highways drainage system was carried out as an expedient measure however this proved inadequate to completely solve the problem. There were a number of flooding incidents during the year at the at this point and temporary traffic lights were installed to prevent excessive water spray from vehicles damaging the fabric of the listed Angel Cottages. North Somerset Council has programmed a major repair to the culvert during the coming year.

Considerable progress was made with agreeing safety improvements on the A370 and it has been agreed with Highways to implement the works in two phases, firstly to address speeding and secondly to improve pedestrian safety and access. The first phase of speed reduction measures has been carried out comprising the creation of a new 40mph limit entering the village from the bypass, repositioning the 30mph limit and the creation of entrance gateways at each end of the village. Speed Indicator Signs showing 'your speed is' messages have also been installed at both ends. The Parish Council has contributed financially to the programme in addition to grant funding from Stancombe Quarry and Bristol Airport Community Funds.

Although the responsibility of North Somerset Highways, the Parish Council is contributing to the maintenance of the verges along the pavement towards Backwell for the benefit of pedestrians, wheelchair and buggy users and a principal route to school. Considerable improvement to access has been made.

We have worked with the Footpaths Officer to achieve repairs and improvements to the network of footpaths around the village.

We have contributed to the consultation on the North Somerset Local Plan which will set out policies for development in North Somerset up to 2036/7. The plan is not expected to be adopted before 2025.

Little progress has been made with the area of community land between the school and the railway. This has been held up awaiting proposals from Network Rail for flood relief ponds alongside the site. We have been disappointed to hear that Network Rail have suspended their proposals which will lead to a further delay in taking this project forward.

We have been looking at obligations to consider opportunities for improvement to biodiversity within the parish. Possibilities are being considered in the areas around the playing fields at Farleigh Green.

I should like to extend thanks to members of the Parish Council and volunteers who have a valuable contribution to our community, and especially to our District Councillor Annemieke Waite and Clare Melton our Parish Clerk. There are currently two vacancies on the council which we are seeking volunteers to fill.

Geoff Coombs
Chair of Council