Chairman's Report to the Flax Bourton Annual Parish Meeting 2025

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 very welcome to attend.

During the year we worked closely 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 at 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 drainage diversions were carried out last year which have achieved some improvement while a permanent solution was being developed and is expected to be implemented this summer. In the present difficult financial circumstances, we are very fortunate that substantial funding has been approved by North Somerset for this work.

The first phase of the speed reduction measures on the A370 were carried out last year comprising entrance gateways, speed limit alterations and village entrance gateways. These have shown some improvement with a reduction in average speeds being recorded by the speed indicators at each end of the village, which were also part of the scheme. We are pressing for the second phase safety measures identified in the plan to be carried out as soon as North Somerset funds permit. These included improvement to pavements and provision of central islands for pedestrian crossing points throughout the village. The Parish Council has set aside a significant funding contribution towards this work.

The Parish Council has paid for additional clearance work on the verges of the pavement from the village to Backwell Farleigh, which is classed as a safe route to school. We have also received a grant from the Stancombe Quarry Community Fund towards 'siding out' the pavement to remove grass encroachment which has reduced pavement width. This has been causing problems for wheelchair and buggy users. Work is due to commence during school holidays.

We have worked with the Footpaths Officer to achieve repairs and improvements to the network of footpaths around the village. A footpath bridge has been replaced and the steps on the footpath at the cricket ground have been repaired.

Other activities include:
- continued discussions with North Somerset regarding the acquisition by the Parish Council of the 'Designated Community Land' adjacent to the school.
- commissioned tree safety work at the Farleigh Green playing field.
- contributed to the consultation on the North Somerset Local Plan which will set out policies for development in Somerset up to 2037/9. The plan is not expected to be adopted before 2027.

We are grateful to the Hub CIO who manage the Village Hall on behalf of the community. Solar Panels have been fitted, funded through a grant and the Parish Council has jointly contributed to fabric repairs.

I should like to extend thanks to members of the Parish Council and volunteers who have made a valuable contribution to our community, especially to our District Councillor Annemieke Waite and to Helen Nelson our Parish Clerk. Also, we welcome Paul Seaver as a new Parish Councillor. There are currently two vacancies on the council which we are seeking volunteers to fill.

Geoff Coombs
Chair of Council