

Wraxall and Failand Public Meeting 7.30 pm 23rd October 2017 at Failand Village Hall

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Mrs Alison Lock, the Chairman of Wraxall and Failand Parish Council.

54 members of the public were present, along with five Parish Councillors; a District Councillor; the local Police beat officer and the Parish Clerk.

Cllr Mrs Lock welcomed everyone to the meeting, and explained the format that the meeting would take.

The following PowerPoint presentations were given, a copy of which would be made available on the Parish Council's website:

- Cllr Bob Sheppard outlined the Parish Council's role in regards to the proposals for speed reducing measures for Clevedon Road, Flax Bourton Road and Weston Road, and the progress which has been made since the last public meeting in 2015.
- Cllr David Robinson further outlined the North Somerset Council's proposals along with the costings of these proposals and the potential funding sources.
- James Weelen spoke on behalf of Failand Residents against Speeding (FRAS). James gave an overview of the progress which has been made since the last meeting held in 2015, including an assessment of the proposals from North Somerset Council's Highways team .

The members of the public were invited by the Chairman to give their views and opinions on the proposals.

These are summarised as follows:

- The problem is vehicles exceeding the 40 mph limit. The roads are suitable for a 40 mph speed limit, not a 30 mph limit. Traffic calming measures such as speed humps will increase the hazards to road users, not reduce them, and should not be considered.
- FRAS has not shown that the current 40 mph limits on Flax Bourton Road and Weston Road are not fit for purpose. There are no 'accident potential features' on these roads when compared with other roads that have a genuine need for a 30 mph speed limit e.g. Long Ashton. Flax Bourton Road is an open road with good visibility. There is no need for pedestrians to cross the road. The footpaths are adequate. There is no significant accident record on Flax Bourton Road and Weston Road. There is a problem with vehicles parking on the Flax Bourton Road / Clevedon Road junction. There is no major problem with airport traffic, which is grossly exaggerated. Outside of commuter times there is very little traffic on Flax Bourton Road.

- Road safety and traffic speeds have been examined, but air quality has not been. Previous research has shown that when vehicles are made to slow down there is an increase in air pollution. Equally if speed limits were increased it was found that there was a lowering of air pollution. If the speed limits are lowered then pollution will increase, with the potential for bronchial problems being experienced by the elderly and young people who live in the area. This should be considered.
- There has been a tenfold increase in lorries using the roads over the last three years. Cllr Robinson said that the surveys showed that HGVs were only 3 to 5% of all traffic.
- FRAS were thanked for the work that has been done on behalf of the village. There are concerns regarding children walking on the pavements on the external roads, as the pavements on Flax Bourton Road and Weston Road are very narrow. Also it is dangerous to cross Clevedon Road close to the Post Office, and also into Ashton Hill woods where crossing the road is very dangerous.
- A large mirror on the island at the entrance to Belmont Woods would be very helpful in aiding pedestrians to cross the road. Cllr Tom Sage stated that the Forestry Commission owns this piece of land, and NSC has said that such a mirror would be illegal and so it is not possible for one to be installed. (Please see the post meeting footnote for an update regarding this)
- James Weelen confirmed that NSC felt that the proposals being suggested at the Flax Bourton Road and Weston Road junctions with Clevedon Road would be sufficient to encourage better road safety, and the improvement of signage at these junctions would also improve the situation.
- Efforts should be made to stop vehicles taking the routes through Failand. The problem is not the speeds of these vehicles. Vehicles should be encouraged to use the major highways, and not the lanes through Failand. If two vans are passing each other then their wing mirrors are over the pavement. The increased usage of the airport will become a major problem in the future if measures are not taken now.
- The 40 mph speed limit on Clevedon Road is reasonable. A phased approach to the work on Clevedon Road would be suitable. Speed humps on Clevedon Road would be hideous. VAS's are the answer.
- Parking on the pavements causes a lot of problems. Also, those parked at an inconsiderate position, i.e. near the bend on Flax Bourton Road make the problem worse.
- Parking on the pavements is the problem. There should be no road narrowing in Weston Road. Views of waiting traffic would be visible from residential properties.
- Clevedon Road can be so busy that children and other pedestrians have to wait for up to two minutes to cross the road to reach the bus stop.
- There needs to be a pedestrian crossing on Clevedon Road for pedestrians to use to reach the bus stop.
- Cllr Tom Sage said that NSC has decided that there cannot be a pedestrian crossing here, as it would require a central island and the road is too narrow for this. Cllr Sage expressed the view that there are far more important issues to be addressed

than the vehicle speed limits. There should be double yellow lines at the Flax Bourton Road / Clevedon Road junction.

- The speed limit of 60 mph at the top of Belmont Hill is far too high. A 40 mph limit would be more appropriate.
- Cllr David Robinson said that work is in progress to examine and address the speed limits on all of the roads in the area, including Belmont Hill.
- Heavy lorries are using Weston Road and are ignoring the weight limit on this road.
- There is no evidence that a 30 mph speed limit for Flax Bourton and Weston Roads would be appropriate. Until NSC can prove that the benefits of reducing the limit outweigh the cost then all measures to reduce the speed limit should be opposed. The DOT publishes a document called the Speed Limit Appraisal Tool and the purpose of this is to help local authorities to assess potential schemes and evaluate their likely benefits. Until NSC run this tool, and hard evidence is gained that the benefits would exceed the cost then any proposals to reduce the speed limits should be rejected.
- The problems being experienced in Sandy Lane should also be addressed. Delivery vehicles are using the lane as a rat run.
- The traffic light sequences at the Clevedon Road / Weston Road junction are not suitable for purpose and need to be reassessed.

The Chairman asked the following questions of the audience, to try to gauge the level of support for NSC's proposals:

1. Do you agree with the full proposal from NSC, which includes traffic calming and costing around £80,000 ? Is it what you want ?

Yes: 20

No: 34

2. If taking a phased approach, are Flax Bourton Road and Weston Road perceived as a higher priority than Clevedon Road?

Yes: 33

No: 20

3. Given the cost and the likely funding situation, if the only way that a phased approach could get off the ground is by way of a significant contribution from residents, how many of you would be prepared to make some sort of financial commitment?

30 people said that they would be prepared to make a financial contribution.

The Chairman said that the next stage was to wait for the Bristol Airport Community Fund to decide whether they would be prepared to make a grant in light of the evidence presented to them. Also a formal application would be made to NSC requesting for funding, however NSC has indicated that as the accident statistics are very low, and they have limited funds, then a contribution would be unlikely. The Parish Council will have to decide the way forward, having taken into consideration the views expressed at this meeting.

PC Martin Faithfull introduced himself as the beat manager for the Parish. Martin will make his supervisors aware of the concerns raised at the meeting and will pay particular attention to these problems. The reality is that the Police have suffered drastic funding cuts, and he covers nine villages, so the time that he spends in the parish is very limited. PC Faithfull encouraged people to create and join a new Speedwatch team. Speeding is one of the Police and Crime Commissioner's priorities.

The meeting concluded at 8.55 pm.

POST MEETING FOOTNOTE

During the meeting it was reported that the triangle of land at the junction of Flax Bourton Road and Weston Road was owned by the Forestry Commission. The Earthlight mapping system shows that the land has been adopted by NSC. In previous discussions with NSC Highways, they've advised that a mirror is not an approved item of highway street furniture but they would not be averse to a mirror being installed on private land next to the highway.