

# BODENHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP

## MINUTES OF THE BODENHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP'S MEETING AT THE SIWARD JAMES CENTRE AT 7.30PM ON TUESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2014

ITEM	ACTION
<p><b><u>ITEM 1 - WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION BY CHAIRMAN</u></b></p> <p>1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the February Meeting and, in particular, two new members, Mr Jeremy Schwartz and his wife Mrs Sheila Schwartz, who have recently moved into Willow Cottage at Maund Bryan.</p> <p>2. <b><u>Summary of the Past Month.</u></b></p> <p>a. The Chairman summarised the events of the past month by saying that, despite all the rain since the last Meeting on 28 January, Bodenham had been extremely lucky compared with the South of England, and especially most recently the Thames Valley. The two key factors had been, first, the way that the succession of storms which Bodenham had suffered had had time between them to let just enough of the water to get away and, second, the existence of the relief channel. This had allowed both river water flooding up Millcroft Road and water from the Brook to escape onto the flood plain, rather than backing up towards Bodenham Moor as it did in April 1998 and July 2007.</p> <p>b. The Chairman said that he had kept a close eye on the situation, but overall there had been no major cause for concern. Nevertheless, there had been a certain amount of flooding around the Village:</p> <p>(1) The River Lugg had been very high at times and at one point the Butts Bridge gauge in Leominster had recorded a level within about 5 inches of the record reached in July 2007. As a result the Ketch Lane junction had been flooded from 6 - 17 February. The greatest depth of water he had measured on the road there was 21 inches.</p> <p>(2) Over the past month there had been 8 times when the telemetry system had warned that the water level in the Brook had reached 0.5m. On two of these occasions the 0.9m alarm had been received as well and this had produced enough water for the relief channel to operate. The highest water level recorded had been 1.22m on 12 February, but this was well below what had been achieved in the past.</p> <p>(3) There had also been surface water flooding in Chapel Lane with water coming off the adjacent fields and crossing the C1125 into the East end of Orchard Close. This had highlighted one of the Group's concerns about Bovis Homes' proposal to build houses on Shuker's Field. The Chairman gave particular thanks to Mr Bob Pritchard and Mr Mike Stephens for all they had done to monitor the situation and keep the drains clear, otherwise the situation could have been much worse. Mr Stephens had also tracked down one of the main places where the water was coming from and had been giving thought to how improvements could be made in the future.</p> <p>(4) On The Moor (C1125) there had been times when surface water had come northwards from the fields on higher ground South of the Village and flooded across the road outside Eastfields. Here the problem had been, again, blocked drains, but in some cases the blockages had been so bad that there was nothing members of the Group could do. The Chairman confirmed that he had asked for</p>	

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<p>Balfour Beatty to jet the drains.</p> <p>(5) On 11 February there had also been a problem in Rowberry Lane outside Blue Cedar Cottage where water had been coming off the adjacent field and running down the roadside ditch, but in such quantity as to overflow into the property's drive and threaten the house. The owners had taken action to block the ditch and divert the water so that it then ran down the road surface past the house. Since the Lane is little used, the quantity of water not great and the weather mild, this had not created any risk to traffic.</p> <p>(6) In Bodenham Village some gardens near the Bridge had been partially flooded, but, so far as he was aware, the only building affected had been the Church where he understood that the kitchen had had some water in it.</p> <p>c. The Chairman asked if anyone had heard of any resident in the Parish having had flood water in their house, but no one had.</p> <p>d. The Chairman remarked that members would be pleased to know that there were people outside Bodenham who were concerned for their safety. He had had two visits from Mr Charles Pudge, the Chairman of the River Lugg Internal Drainage Board, two from Mr Les Harrison, the Board's Engineer, and one from Bodenham's District Councillor, Cllr Jeremy Millar. He had also completed a report on the recent flooding for Herefordshire Council at their request.</p> <p>e. He went on to note that Balfour Beatty had been encouragingly proactive around the Village and, for example, had already removed the debris from the Ketch Lane culverts which he and the Secretary had piled on the verge there.</p> <p>f. Finally, on a pleasant note the Chairman reported that he had received a very nice anonymous Thank You card addressed to the Group and that several people had expressed their thanks to him for what the BFPG was doing.</p> <p>3. <b>Apologies.</b> There were 39 members attending the Meeting and apologies were received from Mr Lavender, Mrs Parker, Mrs Watson, Miss Gibson, and Ms Tremain.</p>	
<p><b><u>ITEM 2 – MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</u></b></p> <p>4. The Chairman asked members to approve the Minutes of the January Meeting which had been circulated earlier with the Agenda and which were also available in hard copy on the tables for those members without computers. Approval of the Minutes was proposed by Mr Dennis Brown, seconded by Mrs Griffiths and agreed.</p>	
<p><b><u>ITEM 3 – MATTERS ARISING</u></b></p> <p>5. <b><u>Sandbags.</u></b></p> <p>a. <b><u>Redistribution of Stocks.</u></b></p> <p>(1) The Chairman reported that in the middle of the month he had received a belated request for sandbags from The Forge, while at the same time both the Chapel Lane and School car park sandbag cages had been emptied. On 10 February he had therefore been forced to call on Mr Derek Pritchard for help and he and Mr Pritchard had used the latter's tractor and trailer to move 60 sandbags from the Parish Hall through the flooded Ketch Lane junction to The Forge where they laid them out along part of the garden to protect the house.</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>(2) Three days later he had again asked Mr Pritchard for help. This time he, the Secretary, and Mr and Mrs Dowler, with the assistance of Mr Pritchard and his Landrover and trailer, had moved 60 sandbags from Hamwyn Joinery to refill the Chapel Lane cage. They had then taken all the remaining sandbags from the Parish Hall and moved them to Bodenham Village, going <i>via</i> the A49 and Dinmore Hill to avoid the floods. There they had refilled the cage on the car park opposite the School with 60 sandbags and delivered a further 30 sandbags to Bridge Cottage.</p> <p>(3) On both these days Mr Pritchard had dropped everything to come to the Group's assistance at no notice at all and the Chairman said that he felt it to be only right and proper that the Group should reimburse Mr Pritchard for his time and diesel. The Chairman suggested that the Group offer Mr Pritchard £50 for each of these occasions, making a total of £100. With general agreement the payment was proposed by Mr Tilford and seconded by Mr Hemming.</p> <p>(4) The Chairman also asked that his particular thanks to Mr and Mrs Dowler be recorded since at no notice they had come and helped on the second occasion. He was sure that they had had better things to do than move 150 sandbags around the Parish, but their help had been very much appreciated.</p> <p>(5) The Chairman also mentioned that on 14 February he had received a request from Cllr Jeremy Millar for sandbags to help Stoke Prior. He had offered up to 50, but in the end they had not been required.</p>	
<p>b. <b><u>Current Stocks.</u></b></p> <p>(1) The Chairman noted that, as a result of these redistributions, there were no sandbags at all left at the Parish Hall. However, he had ordered 500 filled sandbags to be supplied as soon as possible.</p> <p>(2) As he had reported at previous Meetings, he had also ordered 200 empty sandbags. After a long delay Balfour Beatty had just replied that they do not supply empty sandbags and suggested that the Group procure them from Radbournes. He had asked the Parish Clerk to point out to Balfour Beatty that Amey Herefordshire had always supplied empty sandbags in the past, that the Prime Minister had said that residents should not have to pay for sandbags, and that, by supplying us with empty sandbags and thus helping us to recycle existing biodegrading sandbags, Balfour Beatty would actually be saving themselves time, trouble and money. He had yet to receive a response.</p>	<p><b>Chairman</b></p>
<p>c. <b><u>Lessons Learnt.</u></b> The Chairman suggested that these recent experiences had taught two lessons:</p> <p>(1) The need for the Group to get local residents to think ahead and stock up with sandbags before the winter, rather than emptying our stocks in a panic when flooding is imminent or actually taking place. He thought that the Group would have to have a campaign in August/ September to get the message across that, if residents do not act in good time, they may find themselves without sandbags when they most need them and would then have only themselves to blame.</p> <p>(2) In view of the difficulties of getting sandbags from Bodenham Moor to Bodenham Village when there is flooding, it would be sensible to have a larger stock of sandbags West of the River. This could best be achieved by some residents in the Village, especially those most at risk, having larger stocks in storage on their properties. He would discuss this with individual residents in due course.</p>	<p><b>Chairman</b></p>

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<p>6. <b><u>The Orchard Close and Ketch Lane Culverts.</u></b> The Chairman reminded members that at their January Meeting Mrs Liz Davies had raised the subject of the partially blocked culvert in the drainage system serving Orchard Close. Bodenham's District Councillor, Cllr Jeremy Millar, had visited the Chairman on 16 February and the Chairman had taken the opportunity once again to reiterate the Group's concern both about this culvert in Mr Pugh's field and also the need to replace those at Ketch Lane.</p> <p>7. <b><u>Bowley Lane.</u></b> When water had recently been cascading down Bowley Lane towards Saffron's Garage, members of the BFPG had seen a local resident not wearing a high visibility jacket clearing the road of mud and trying to use sandbags to redirect the water into Riffins Brook. It was agreed that not wearing a high visibility jacket in this situation was highly dangerous given the speed of traffic along this stretch of the A417 and the Chairman asked those who knew the resident in question to urge him to take precautions. It was also pointed out that the problem had been partly created because the drains in Bowley Lane were full of silt after the recent bad weather.</p> <p>8. <b><u>January Treasurer's Report.</u></b> Mrs Bowden asked why, given that there was no Meeting in December, there had been expenditure of £27.00 to the Siward James Trust for the hire of the meeting room. The Treasurer replied that this was for the hire of the room at Siward James in 2013. (<b><u>Afternote.</u></b> The hire charges for September, October and November were for a total of 3 hours @ £9. Whilst both September and October had been for only a half hour on each occasion, the November Meeting had been for 2 hours because this had included the visit from Dr Bianca Ambrose-Oji and the end of year party).</p>													
<p><b><u>ITEM 4 - TREASURER'S REPORT</u></b></p> <p>9. On behalf of the Treasurer the Chairman reported that the balance as at the last Meeting on 28 January had stood at £2,385.07. The very successful Coffee Morning on Saturday, 8 February had raised a most impressive £530. The breakdown was:</p> <table data-bbox="183 1160 587 1361"> <tr> <td>Cake Stall</td> <td>£122.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tombola</td> <td>£51.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Refreshments</td> <td>£100.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Raffle</td> <td>£152.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Donations</td> <td><u>£104.00</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>£530.00</td> </tr> </table> <p>10. The Chairman said that this brought the new balance to £2,915.07, while the expenditure of £100 for Mr Derek Pritchard would be shown in the Treasurer's Report at the next Meeting.</p> <p>11. He went on to express, once again, the thanks of members to Mrs Liz Davies and her team for all their hard work in organising and running such an extremely successful occasion.</p>	Cake Stall	£122.50	Tombola	£51.50	Refreshments	£100.00	Raffle	£152.00	Donations	<u>£104.00</u>	Total	£530.00	<b>Treasurer</b>
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<p><b><u>ITEM 5 – EXTERNAL CONTACTS</u></b></p> <p>12. <b><u>BBC Radio 4 “You and Yours”.</u></b> The Chairman reported that, as most members would be aware, he and the Secretary had been interviewed by the BBC for the Radio 4 “You and Yours” programme which went out on Friday, 14 February. He remarked that a surprising number of people seemed to have heard the programme and he had had a variety of responses, including one from a member of Lewes Town Council who had been very interested in the work of the Group and wanted to seek his advice. He had received a similar request from two members of a group in the New Forest and had arranged for them to ring him on 27 February to discuss their problems.</p> <p>13. <b><u>BBC Radio Hereford &amp; Worcester.</u></b> Continuing, the Chairman said that on 24 February he had received a telephone call from a reporter with BBC Radio Hereford &amp; Worcester who had been seeking views about the flood risk posed by the proposed Bovis Homes development of</p>													

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<p>Shuker's Field. He had recorded an interview over the telephone and had subsequently taken part in a live interview on the 'Howard and Toni at Breakfast' programme at 7.40am on 25 February which some members had also heard.</p> <p>14. <b><u>Herefordshire Council - Road Closures.</u></b></p> <p>a. The Chairman then turned to an issue relating to the flooding which affects the C1121, Ketch Lane and Smeadals Lane in most Winters - the closure of these roads to vehicles. He remarked that they carry a lot of traffic, with the C1121, in particular, providing one of only two means of access to Bodenham Village, as well as a much used shortcut between the A49 and the A417. He noted that at present:</p> <p>(1) The fact that these roads were flooded had not been shown on the Herefordshire Council 'Roads Closures and Diversions' website until the last day or so. (Somewhat ironically the C1121 was, he said, currently shown as being flooded, but passable with care, when in fact it had been completely flood free, albeit muddy, for the past week).</p> <p>(2) On only two occasions this Winter had official 'Road Closed' signs been put out on Millcroft Road by Balfour Beatty and in both instances this had been long after the flooding had started – indeed, only just before it disappeared. The only signs that had been put out (and taken down again) in a timely manner were those which he and the Secretary had deployed themselves.</p> <p>b. Being well aware that Herefordshire Council are facing severe financial and resource pressures, he had sent an e-mail asking whether the BFPG might be able to assist, for example, by letting the appropriate people in the Council know when a road in the Parish is flooded or otherwise obstructed – and when it is clear again. (Quite apart from flooding, the C1121 has been affected by fallen trees in recent weeks). He had also suggested to the Council that the Group might be given the necessary signs and authorised to put them out to show roads as closed, thus relieving the burden on Balfour Beatty.</p> <p>c. The Chairman concluded by saying that had made the offer and he would now wait and see what happens.</p>	<p><b>Chairman</b></p>
<p><b><u>ITEM 6 – FUTURE PLANS</u></b></p> <p>15. <b><u>Neighbourhood Plan.</u></b> The Chairman remarked that by now most members would be aware of the Neighbourhood Plan and of its importance, not just to the future development of Bodenham, but to the future risk of flooding in the Parish. An Open Day had been held at Bodenham School on Saturday, 22 February and a second one would be on Sunday, 2 March at the Siward James Centre. The Secretary had sent out copies of posters for this event to members of the group on email and there have been posters and flyers around the Village. He suggested that it was in everyone's interest to keep themselves aware of what is going on and to help where possible and, with that in mind, he encouraged everyone to come to the next Open Day.</p> <p>16. <b><u>Emergency Plan.</u></b> He went on to say that he was taking the opportunity presented by the Open Day to try and make progress with another initiative - the development of an Emergency Plan for the Parish. The intention was to build on the kind of structure which the BFPG already have in place for flooding, but to cover a wider range of emergency situations, such as prolonged snow, prolonged periods without electricity, a fuel drivers' strike, or a major accident or fire. He urged members attending the Open Day to provide their comments and ideas on planning for emergencies in general, and two aspects in particular:</p> <p>a. <b><u>Resources.</u></b> Identifying those local residents with special skills which might be useful in an emergency (for example, first aid training) and those with special equipment</p>	<p><b>All</b></p>

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<p>(for example, 4x4 vehicles, tractors, chainsaws, digging equipment, etc).</p> <p>b. <b><u>Vulnerable People</u></b>. Identifying those local residents who might need special care in an emergency (adding to the existing BFPG list and the wider Carers' list).</p>	<p><b>All</b></p>
<p><b><u>ITEM 7 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></b></p>	
<p>17. <b><u>Blocked Drains</u></b>. Mr Mullenger asked if Balfour Beatty could pressure jet the drains in Bodenham as they were now quite badly silted up. He suggested that if Balfour Beatty or the Parish Council were able to notify him in advance he would be willing to point out to Balfour Beatty the particular drains needing attention.</p> <p>18. <b><u>Bunhill Lane</u></b>. Mr Mullenger also mentioned problems posed by the gravel which comes down from Bunhill Lane and blocks the drains near the Bridge. Mr Tilford said that he thought that Bunhill Lane was the responsibility of Hampton Court and that they had been asked to attend to this in the past.</p> <p>19. <b><u>Parish Litter Pick (Saturday, 5 April 2014)</u></b>. Finally, the Chairman mentioned that the next Parish Litter Pick would take place on Saturday, 5 April, starting and finishing at the Parish Hall. All the details were on posters and flyers which would appear around the Village shortly. Again this year, a free lunch of soup and rolls will be available for all those taking part.</p>	<p><b>Secretary</b></p> <p><b>Secretary</b></p> <p><b>All</b></p>
<p><b><u>ITEM 8 – DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING</u></b></p>	
<p>20. The Chairman confirmed that the next Meeting will take place on Tuesday, 25 March at 7.30pm at the Siward James Centre.</p> <p>21. There being no further business the meeting ended at 8.10pm.</p>	

Cllr KA Mitcheson  
Chairman

25 March 2014