

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
HELD AT THE SIWARD JAMES CENTRE  
at 7.00 pm on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

**Present:** Cllr Roger Austin, Cllr Alec Avery, Cllr Tony Clark, Cllr Jim Crane, Cllr Stan Davis, Cllr Dennis Jackson, Cllr Pam James-Moore (Chair), Cllr Tony Mitcheson, Cllr David Tilford.

District Councillor Bruce Baker was also in attendance.

8 members of the public were present.

1. **Apologies for Absence.** Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Richard Layton.
2. **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2015.** The Minutes of the previous Meeting were accepted as a correct record (Proposer: Cllr Tilford: Seconder Cllr Mitcheson).
3. **Matters Arising.** There were no matters arising from the Minutes.
4. **The Chairman's Report.** Cllr James-Moore read the Chairman's Report, which is attached as Annex A.
5. **Reports from Local Organisations.**
  - 5.1 Reports were received from the following local organisations and are attached as Annexes B - H.
    - Bodenham Ramblers
    - Bodenham Leisure Club
    - Bodenham Christian Fellowship
    - Bodenham Community Charity
    - Bodenham Flood Protection Group
    - St Michael and All Angels' Church
    - Bodenham Tennis Club
    - Bodenham Women's Group
  - 5.2 Mrs Gwen Bowden read the Report of Bodenham Leisure Club.
  - 5.3 Mrs Liz Davies read the Report of St Michael and All Angel's Church.
  - 5.4 Cllr James-Moore commented that the Bodenham Bowling Club had about 40 members, but was seeking to attract new younger members.
6. **Comments from Members of the Public.** No comments were received from members of the public.
7. There being no other business, the Meeting closed at 7.15pm.

## Chairman's Report 2015-16

The Parish Council has completed another busy and interesting year not the least in the formation of the Council. We started after the election in May with 7 Councillors followed by 3 co-options (Councillors Jamie Booth, Les Herbert and Tony Mitcheson), followed by 4 resignations (Councillors Jamie Booth, Bob Clarke, Les Herbert and Jeff Pollard), then 4 co-options (Councillors Tony Clark, Jim Crane, Richard Layton and David Tilford), which brought us to the required 10 members. However, it would be good to have more interest from younger members of the village in becoming Councillors.

Two of the highlights of the year occurred in October. First was the presentation of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service to the Bodenham Flood Prevention Group by Lady Darnley. The Group are to be congratulated and thanked for the many hours of hard work that they do for the village. The other memorable day was 5 days later on October 28th 2015 when the application by Bovis Homes to build 49 houses South of Chapel Lane (Shuker's Field) came before Herefordshire Council's Planning Committee. The hearing was attended by a large number of Bodenham residents and to their delight the application was refused. Bodenham was fortunate in having 2 very capable representatives, Councillor Tony Mitcheson and Mr Jim Crane who together with our District Councillor, Bruce Baker, spoke against the application. We thank them for their hard work and contribution. I must also mention the several hundred people who signed petitions or registered objections with Herefordshire Council.

On the subject of housing; the Bell Homes development is well under way. The site will be called England's Field. We dealt with over 20 planning applications including a slurry pit, bio-digesters, a solar farm, house extensions, new build housing, tree lopping and house demolition.

The Neighbourhood Plan is progressing thanks to the many hours devoted to compiling it by Councillors Tony Mitcheson and David Tilford. Our thanks to both of them and to their committee.

Our Locality Steward, Mrs Donna Tregenza, and our Footpath Officer, Mr Mike Darley, have on many occasions worked together and improved our rights of way, filled pot holes and resolved many problems, as has the Lengthsman, Dave Campbell.

The running of Queenswood and Bodenham Lakes has now been taken on by Hereford Nature Trust and New Leaf. Cllr Tony Clark is a member of the council on the committee which oversees the two sites.

I hesitate to mention speeding on the A 417. Following misinformation from Herefordshire Council we had to cancel the pending contract to install VASs (Vehicle Activated Signs, such as the one in Sutton St Nicholas). It has now been proposed that we have gates at either end of the speed restriction area, but the matter is on hold until after the Neighbourhood Plan has been completed.

We still have the usual problems of dog fouling and speeding, but we have many things to be thankful for in our very busy and lively village.

My thanks go to many people, including Sue Howarth who produces the *Newsletter* and Tony Mitcheson for the Website. Finally, thank you to our Parish Clerk, Chris Smith, and all the members of the Parish Council, and to District Councillor Bruce Baker for their help and support.

Pamela James-Moore

7th May 2016



## **BODENHAM RAMBLERS** **Bodenham, Herefordshire**

### Bodenham Ramblers Report for Parish Council AGM 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016

As a Club, Bodenham Ramblers continues to thrive despite the many obstacles affecting any social walking activity today including blocked footpaths, closures and public sites being leased out as Herefordshire Council no longer feel able to support these facilities.

The club is hopeful that the recent handing over of responsibility to New Leaf/The Herefordshire Wildlife Trust for maintaining Bodenham Lake and Queenswood Country Park will ensure that both locations are protected for all who wish to visit and enjoy the facilities for the foreseeable future.

At the time of our own AGM in March our membership consisted of:

56 Walkers, 8 Social and 4 Life members.

During the last year two long time residents of the village, Sam & Pat Meadowcroft resigned from the Club due to ill health. They made a significant contribution to the club and will be very much missed. Sam particularly was for a long time a member of what became known as the Bodenham "Geriatrics" Club and together with other members of that time carried out a lot of work in order to ensure the network of footpaths around the village remained accessible to all including the restoration of many stiles.

Sadly two of our members passed away last year, Ron Munden and Brian Clark, and again will both be missed.

The club organises walks on a 10-day cycle on Sundays and Wednesdays and these have been very well attended with sometimes as many as 25+ walkers over the winter period (which can slow up proceedings if there are a lot of stiles!). However, the promise of lunch at a local hostelry normally keeps everyone going! I think it would be fair to say that the numbers on summer walks (packed lunches) is normally somewhat less although the first walk of the 2016 summer schedule attracted 27 members.

The Club recently organised its annual Spring holiday which this year was on Exmoor at Holnicote House, Selworthy and was enjoyed by 42 people - the weather was, given the changeable pattern of the last few weeks, very kind to them. In previous years the club has made its own holiday arrangements but it was decided this year to sign up with HF Holidays who not only provide accommodation but also organise a programme of walks for all levels.

Our network of members now covers quite a wide area as in addition to Bodenham residents we also have those from the surrounding districts including Wellington, Dinmore, Leominster, Yarkhill, Marden, Hereford etc.

Our summer programme includes walks from as far afield as New Radnor and the Welsh borders, to Bringsty Common and many locations in between and around Herefordshire.

Later in the year we will again be holding our Christmas Lunch at the Hereford Golf Club and a raffle will be held to raise funds for the Air Ambulance.

New members are always welcome and are invited to join us. Walks are taken at a steady relaxed pace in what we believe to be good company.

## **Annex C**

### **BODENHAM LEISURE CLUB**

#### **ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL**

**9<sup>th</sup> May, 2016**

The Leisure Club continues to meet twice a month, mostly in the Parish Hall, and has at present 37 members.

Following the AGM in April the previous four officers and two committee members were re-elected. A third co-opted committee member was duly elected.

During the past year the Club has enjoyed in house lunches and teas and with a Christmas lunch at The Royal Oak, Broadwas. Trips have been to Porthcawl, Webbs of Wychbold and a ride around Herefordshire and Gloucestershire to see the wild daffodils. Talks have included St John's Ambulance, Views of Tenby, Aspects of Crime and Lost in Herefordshire. Fun afternoons have been a Panel Game, a Beetle Drive and an Easter Bonnet Parade plus a musical afternoon provided by a visiting musician.

It is unfortunate that of the 37 members only three are male and any physical moving of furniture and facilities usually falls to these three. It was never intended that the Club should be an all Ladies Club but it is rapidly heading that way.

New members would always be made very welcome.

Gwenllian Bowden

## Annual Report April 2015 – March 2016

The Fellowship is independent of any denomination and is a member of 'Churches Together in Hereford' and the national organisation 'The Evangelical Alliance'. The Fellowship is run on a week by week basis by its officers and members, with a body of Trustees (including four Fellowship members) overseeing the building. We became a registered Charity on 4th August 2015. We welcome visitors to any of our services and meetings. In the year to 31st March 2016, donations of £3,186 were made to Christian missions, aid organisations and local charities. This included £415 raised from café@chapel in 2014-15 (£504 in 2015-16 shown later) and £902 raised from Travels with a Camera.

### **Sunday Worship**

During the year we have continued to worship at the Chapel each Sunday from 10.30am – 11.45. The regular attendance at Sunday morning worship varies from 15 to 30. It is a joy to welcome several friends and carers from Moor Court in Bodenham on a regular basis. The services regularly include a monthly Fellowship Service at which members take part, with speakers from the Fellowship and other churches, chapels & mission organisations on the remaining Sundays. Services are informal and are followed by refreshments.

During the year we welcomed the following speakers for their first speaking engagement at the Chapel: Phil Rickett (from Gloucester), Roger Chilvers (from Gloucester – 1<sup>st</sup> visit since 1983), Rob Barnett (from Bewdley), Col. Robbie Hall (from Newent), Dr. Claire Hollingsworth (Hereford) & Canon Ian Pusey (from Exmouth).

Peter & Gill Hollingsworth have moved to West Wales so our music is now regularly provided by an Electronic Hymnal instead of Peter's guitar.

### **Bible Study & Prayer Meetings**

A weekly Bible Study & Prayer meeting has been held on Thursday evenings at the homes of members. Studies in the last year have included Christian Healing, Letters to Titus & Timothy & the last 10 Chapters of the Old Testament.

### **Ladies' Bible Study**

A Ladies Bible Study is held twice a month at the Chapel on Tuesday mornings. This is led by Margaret Seccombe. Studies have included 'A Royal Rescue (Esther)', 'He is our Peace' (Ephesians) & 'Studies in some Psalms'.

### **Café@Chapel**

Café@Chapel is a joint venture with St. Michael's Church. This continued on Thursday mornings from 10.30am – 12noon throughout the year and is an opportunity for anyone to call in for coffee and a chat. Attendances are now regularly in double figures and have on occasions exceeded 20. Donations from the 2015-16 proceeds of £504 were made to the following charities: Midlands Air Ambulance £100; Muheza Hospice Care £100; Close House £100; Hereford Night Shelter £100; Hope Carriers Trust £52; Ear Aid Nepal £52;

### **Newsletter**

A monthly newsletter is produced which is available from the Chapel and Post Office or can be delivered on request.

### **Foreign Mission**

Mike & Fiona Smith have now relocated to Pokhara in Nepal to Commission the new Ear Hospital which was set up by Mike and opened in November 2015. They returned home for a few weeks in January.

Arthur & Yvonne Etheridge continued leading the Hereford based Hope Carriers Trust, which sends aid to Romania mainly for disadvantaged children. Several truckloads of aid were sent during the year, and the Trust is also involved with the provision of facilities for young adults. A new larger truck has recently been purchased.

### **Chapel**

During the year the remaining three of the main Chapel Windows were replaced at a cost of approx. £3,600 towards which a gift of £1,000 was made by a local Christian Trust.

### **Seasonal Workers**

For the eleventh year members of the Fellowship hosted evening meals for migrant workers employed by S&A at Marden. 18 fruit-pickers (all from Bulgaria) attended over 3 occasions during the spring and early summer.

### **Evening Presentations**

The Chapel was used on autumn and winter evenings for 'Travels with a Camera' with presentations including: Argentina & Chile; Namibia; Sri Lanka; Eastern Canada; Rotherwas House; Old photographs of Bodenham (late Anthea Bryan collection); diving in Malaysia; Brixham trawler; SAS Chaplain; PoW march in 1945; Scottish Islands; Eritrea; 2015 Miscellany.

Presenters were Canon Ian Pusey; Doug Pearson; Margaret Andrews; Marianne Percival; Pam James Moore; Jennifer Easson; Chris Over; Dr. Richard Collins; Rev. Iain Skinner; Peter Strevens; Mike Steadman; Barry Wilson; Audrey Nunn; Brian Skinner & Dave Hill

£296 was raised for Hope Carriers Trust and £296 for Ear Aid Nepal during these evenings and a further £310 for charities chosen by speakers.

### **Other events**

An evening was held in June to hear about the work of S.A.S.R.A. (The Soldiers' and Airmen's Scripture Readers Association), when A.S.R. Nick Wilson from Salisbury Plain told us about his work.

### **Hire of Chapel**

During the year the Chapel has been hired by the Bodenham Women's Group, Marie Curie Support Group, Bodenham Book Club & Defibrillator group. The Chapel continues to be available for regular or occasional use by other village organisations or individuals, with hire charges currently being £7 per hour, £15 per session or £25 per day.

Bodenham Christian Fellowship can be visited on the internet at:

[www.findachurch.co.uk/churches/so/so55/bodenhamcf/index.html](http://www.findachurch.co.uk/churches/so/so55/bodenhamcf/index.html)

Entries and events are also included in the Bodenham newsletter and on the Bodenham Village website

[www.bodenhamparish.org.uk](http://www.bodenhamparish.org.uk)

Bodenham Christian Fellowship: Charity Number: 1162981

### **Contacts:**

Mrs. Pat Horrigan

Secretary Tel: 01568 797044

Mrs. Marion Pearson

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### **Report of the Bodenham Community Charity 2015/16**

The Bodenham Community Charity is a registered charity Number 218404. The current trustees are

Dr Carolyn Knight    Chairman  
 Mrs Susan Hack      Secretary  
 Mr Stan Davis  
 Mr Rowland Hunt  
 Mrs Louise Layton

Dr Knight and Mr R Hunt are nominative trustees and are appointed by nomination of the Parish Council for a term of 4 years. Their appointments were reconfirmed by the Parish Council in November 2015. The remaining three trustees are co-optative trustees.

The Trustees normally meet twice a year in April/May and November when any applications are considered. The Trustees will, if required, arrange additional special meetings to consider urgent applications.

The objects of the charity are to help “either generally or individuals resident in the Parish who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress by making grants of money or providing or paying for items, services or facilities calculated to reduce the need, hardship or distress of such persons”

There is further detailed guidance in the charity scheme concerning the making of grants, but the objects enable the trustees to make a wide range of grants. For example, the charity has in the past assisted with medical equipment and expenses not otherwise available on the NHS, travelling expenses, fuel costs, equipment and books for students and the cost of extra-curricular school expenses such as school trips and music tuition. It has also in the past made grants to Parish organisations including a past Bodenham Youth Club, the CAP as well as assisting the Flood Protection Group. It is an express criterion for the making of any grant that all other sources of finance (particularly public funds) have been considered or otherwise exhausted. There is no means testing but the trustees consider carefully what applicants tell them about their personal circumstances or the funding of any group or organisation.

All applications and grants are treated in the strictest confidence and the identities of individuals receiving grants are not generally disclosed.

During 2015 a grant was made to St Michael’s School, Bodenham. Grants were made to 2 individuals in the Parish. The Parish Council will also be aware that a grant was made during 2015 to assist in the purchase and installation of defibrillators.

S Hack    Secretary April 2016

## **BODENHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP**



### **REPORT TO THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** **(9 MAY 2016)**

#### **FLOOD RISK**

Although there was extensive flooding in the North of England and in Scotland over the winter, we have, once again, been very fortunate in having had relatively mild weather over the past few months. Nevertheless, there have been a number of storms, the Ketch Lane junction was flooded from 3 - 8 January 2016 and again on 8-9 February 2016. In addition, between 26 December and 28 March the early warning telemetry system in the Millcroft Brook issued 0.5m alerts on no less than seven occasions and on five of these the level rose high enough to trigger the 0.9m alarm. Despite this, there have never been any major concerns about flooding in the Parish. Indeed, observation of the actual water level in the Brook at the Brockington Road Bridge and in the relief channel at Millcroft showed that the telemetry system was over-estimating the water level by up to 0.3m: it needed re-calibration and this has now been done.

#### **GROUP ORGANISATION**

At the AGM on 25 August 2015 the members of the Committee and all the Area Representatives loyally and generously agreed to remain in post, thus ensuring continued stability for another year. The list of committee members and area representatives is attached at Annex A.

#### **MONTHLY MEETINGS**

As always, the Group's Meetings on the last Tuesday of each month have been very well supported, with an average attendance of 27 members.

#### **FLOOD PRECAUTIONS**

**Working Parties.** Although we have been helped by relatively favourable weather, one of the reasons why the risk of flooding has been low is that members of the Group have once again made sure that drains and watercourses, especially those in and around Bodenham Moor, have been properly maintained. For the eighth year in succession a full 'season' of working party sessions was conducted in 2015, with an average of 14 members attending every alternate Friday evening from April to



October to clear away silt and cut back vegetation. Indeed, working parties have already started again for the 2016 season.

**River Lugg Internal Drainage Board (IDB).** As always, the Group has been greatly helped by outside agencies, the longest standing of which has been the IDB. The desilting work carried out by the Board in March 2015 on the relief channel played dividends over the past 12 months when the channel came into operation on two occasions. The Board has also again generously provided the BFPG with some of the herbicide which the Group needs to suppress growth alongside watercourses. This applies especially to the Orchard Close drainage system where the ditches can all too rapidly become choked with vegetation and where careful use of herbicide at the right time can save hours of hard work. The Group is accordingly extremely grateful to the IDB for its continued support.

**Balfour Beatty.** The Group's liaison with Balfour Beatty and, in particular, with their Locality Steward, Mrs Donna Tregenza has remained close. She has been very supportive and once again we would like to express our thanks for her efforts to get repairs carried out on drains and flap valves and to ensure that proper signage is in place when the Ketch Lane junction is flooded. We have always seen this latter task as one in which Group members can play a positive role by alerting Balfour Beatty when warning signs should be put out in Ketch Lane, the C1121 and Smeadal Lane and when they can be taken down again. After several years of offering to help in this way, this was the first in which that offer was accepted and several group members assisted by putting out, taking down and storing signs provided by, and (for legal reasons) as directed by, Balfour Beatty. The fact that some drivers remained under the impression that the signs did not apply to them, and that this winter four came to grief as a result, is perhaps beside the point.

**Sandbags.** As usual, during last summer the stocks of sandbags, both those held in cages and those on private premises, were checked and repaired or replaced as necessary. This resulted in the central reserve of both empty bags and filled sandbags being depleted and Balfour Beatty were asked to provide 200 empty and 100 filled bags to make good this deficiency. This they did and we are most grateful. (Balfour Beatty also supplied the Parish with two pallets of salt for use on local roads and pavements in cold weather and, since the salt is stored close to the sandbags, the Group has been assisting the Parish Clerk by looking after it).

### **PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS.**

Proposals for housing developments in Bodenham Moor and the effect these might have in increasing the already substantial risk to parts of the Village, such as Orchard Close, caused great concern to the Group over the past 12 months. As mentioned in the last Annual Report, members had generally accepted the requirement in Hereford Council's Local Plan (Core Strategy) for Bodenham to accommodate additional houses in the period up to 2031. They had also been supportive of the draft Bodenham Neighbourhood Plan's preference for the majority of these houses to be located in the field opposite England's Gate Inn, a preference partly based on an assessment that this would not increase the flood risk to other nearby properties. The same was not true of Shuker's Field where Bovis Homes were proposing to construct 49 houses and where there was real concern that such a development would increase the already significant flood risk to neighbouring properties in Chapel Lane and Orchard Close, worsen the risk to Brook House and Eastfields/ Gravel Farm, and make it even more likely that the adjacent pumping station would be flooded and that raw sewage would be released into the surrounding area and, *via* the Moor Brook, into the River Lugg.

The BFPG therefore supported Bell Homes' application to build 40 houses on the field opposite England's Gate Inn, as did many group members individually. This support was, however, caveated by requests that Bell Homes should make proper arrangements for the disposal of sewage and should

ensure that their development did not increase the flood risk elsewhere in Bodenham Moor. Although Herefordshire Council gave planning consent, it became clear that Bell Homes' arrangements for sewage disposal amounted to no more than connection to the already overloaded local sewerage system and that their proposals for controlling surface water run-off were not properly thought through and needed to be questioned. Some BFPG members were involved in this process, which was largely conducted by consultants acting for the IDB. Although changes resulted from this, it remains to be seen whether the finally approved system will prove adequate to prevent water levels from being raised in the Millcroft Brook above those currently experienced.

Of much greater concern to the Group was Bovis Homes' proposed construction of 49 houses on Shuker's Field. As reported to the last Annual Parish Meeting, the BFPG submitted a letter strongly objecting to the planning application, as did a large number of the Group's members individually. Herefordshire Council's Planning Committee eventually considered the application on 28 October 2015 at a meeting attended by some 50 Bodenham residents. The Committee refused the application, but it remains to be seen whether Bovis Homes or, indeed, another developer will make a second attempt despite this and despite the emerging Bodenham Neighbourhood Plan's clear rejection of Shuker's Field as a development site.

### **FLOOD RISK INSURANCE**

Occasional requests for help and advice on house insurance continue to be received, mainly from new residents arriving in the Parish. The long-promised Flood Re scheme has just come into operation and, in theory, this should resolve the difficulties which a small proportion of householders experience. However, it is still too early to say how effective the scheme will prove to be in practice, especially given that participation in it by insurance companies is voluntary.

### **OUTSTANDING ISSUES**

**Inadequate Culverts.** As mentioned in previous reports, the poor design and inadequate capacity of the Ketch Lane culverts and the partial blockage of the 'Pugh's Field' culvert remain the Group's main concerns. These have been raised with Herefordshire Council on a number of occasions and, indeed, Mr Mark Watkins of Balfour Beatty visited the Chairman and Secretary on 30 October 2015 and was fully briefed on both issues. However, yet again we have received no response.

### **EXTERNAL CONTACTS**

**Proposed Visit by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change.** Early in the New Year we received a request for the BFPG to host a visit by The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP, the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change. This was to be on Friday, 8 January 2016 and preparations for this were completed. However, in the event the visit was cancelled at short notice.

**Herefordshire Council.** A year ago we reported with regret that one of our greatest supporters, Cllr Jeremy Millar, had decided to move away from Herefordshire. However, it is pleasing to say that his place as our Ward Councillor has been taken by Cllr Bruce Baker, who has proved equally interested in the Group and its activities, to the extent even of attending some of its monthly meetings. We warmly welcome his support.

**Environment Agency and Natural England.** The Group does not include the River Lugg in its self-imposed list of responsibilities, but, given that the BFPG is an organisation with a flood prevention

remit, it is perhaps inevitable that the Secretary should receive reports from local residents about issues relating to the River. Most of these concern fallen trees which are causing actual or potential blockages in the River and these are referred to the Environment Agency. However, others concern activities which potentially contravene environmental legislation, such as the construction of hard standing on banks or the felling of trees, and these are passed to Natural England.

### **The Wye Catchment Partnership.**

- a. The River Wye and Usk Foundation and National Resources Wales are jointly hosting The Wye Catchment Partnership which “was established in 2014 with support from Defra and the Welsh government to bring the farmers, foresters, planners, charities, statutory bodies and people who have an interest in the Wye together to secure better outcomes for the Wye catchment and the environment”. In particular, the Partnership has been tasked with delivering the River Wye Nutrient Management Plan aimed at reducing the level of phosphates in the Wye and Lugg to meet EU standards.
- b. On Monday, 15 June 2015 the Chairman and the Secretary attended a Wye Catchment Partnership seminar at Grange Court in Leominster on the subject of “Delivering the Nutrient Management Plan”. This lasted all day and comprised a series of presentations on the work of the various organisations within the Partnership, notably the Foundation itself, Natural Resources Wales, the Environment Agency and Welsh Water. These covered current work on the catchment, current phosphate levels in the Wye and the Lugg, the effect of proposed developments, and so on. It provided a useful occasion on which both to meet other individuals and agencies who might provide the Group with assistance and also to raise with Welsh Water and with those present generally the BFPG’s concerns about the impact of proposed housing developments in Bodenham and elsewhere on the environment.

## **RESEARCH**

### **Flood Resilience at a Community Level in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.**

- a. As mentioned in the last Annual Report, the Group was approached by Mr Steven Forrest, a PhD Researcher on Flood Resilience at the University of Groningen, in which he invited the Group to take part in an on-line survey. This was part of a four year research project being conducted by an international team based at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands and Westminster University in England. The research is funded by the University of Groningen and is focussing on ways of increasing flood resilience at a community level in both countries. The survey was aimed at obtaining a better understanding of the status of flood groups across the UK and their roles in local flood risk management and in community resilience to flooding. It was completed by the Chairman.
- b. Defra suggested to Mr Forrest that he should follow up the survey by interviewing the BFPG direct and the Chairman and Secretary had a two hour meeting with Mr Forrest at Imperial College in London on Tuesday, 19 May. He subsequently sent the Group a progress report on the project, which compared the recent increase in the number of flood action groups in the UK with the situation in the Netherlands where none at all exist. Mr Forrest suggested some possible reasons for this. For example, in the Netherlands flood action groups were set up by monks and farmers as long ago as the 13<sup>th</sup> Century and over time these have become institutionalized as government water boards with the power to levy taxes. In the Netherlands the constitution places a responsibility on the Government to “keep its citizens’ feet dry”, whereas in the UK the Government has no such formal obligation. As a result, while in the

UK recent floods have attracted great media interest and public concern, in the Netherlands there is currently high public trust in the government water boards, matched by a low level of flood risk awareness.

### **EXTERNAL PUBLICITY**

**BBC Hereford & Worcester.** On 2 June 2015 the Chairman was contacted by Andrew Easton of BBC Hereford & Worcester and recorded a short interview on the Group's receipt of HM The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS) (see below) and what the BFPG had achieved over the past seven years. This was broadcast that afternoon.

#### **The Hereford Times.**

- a. There was a brief mention of the Group's QAVS Award in *The Hereford Times*' edition of Thursday, 4 June 2015.
- b. Mr Bill Wiggins, MP for North Herefordshire, mentioned the BFPG in his 'View from Westminster' column in the Thursday, 7 January 2016 edition of the paper. He did so at the time of severe flooding in the North of England and in Scotland and the need for flood defences to be properly maintained, commenting that "Groups like the Bodenham Flood Prevention Group do sterling work in ensuring that no part is neglected".

### **SOCIAL EVENTS**

**Annual Barbecue.** The Annual Barbecue was held on Saturday, 27 June 2015 at Willow Cottage, Maund Bryan by kind invitation of Mr and Mrs Schwartz. In most unusual weather for a BFPG occasion – it was dry and sunny throughout the event – some 35 members and guests enjoyed a most successful evening in pleasant surroundings with the usual barbecue fare enlivened with Canadian style spare ribs.

**Annual Bonfire Party.** The Annual Bonfire Party was to have been held at Millcroft Farm on Saturday, 3 October 2015. However, it was cancelled as a mark of respect for Mr Leslie 'Nick' Nicolson, one of the Group's most stalwart members, who, sadly, had died two days before. His funeral on 16 October 2015 was attended by the Chairman, Secretary and a number of other BFPG members.

**Annual Quiz Night.** The annual Quiz Night was held on Friday, 27 November 2015 in the Parish Hall. In a very enjoyable and successful evening some £365 was raised for BFPG funds. Particular thanks must go to Mrs Griffiths and her team of Mrs Watson, Mrs Dowler, Mrs Hartfield and Mrs Fryer for making all the arrangements and to Mrs Tricia Sanford, her daughter Felicity Sanford and husband Steve Coney for once again providing and administering the quiz itself.

**Annual Coffee Morning.** The Group's annual Coffee Morning was held on 6 February 2016 in the Siward James Centre and was again very well attended, raising just over £364 towards the Group's work. As always, we are extremely grateful to everyone who supported us so generously and, in particular, to Mrs Liz Davies and her team for making the event such a success.

## **HM THE QUEEN'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE**

The Group's receipt of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service was announced on 2 June 2015. This was a great honour and a most welcome recognition of all the time, effort and hard work which so many members of the BFPG have contributed entirely voluntarily over the past seven years, not only to keeping local residents safe from flooding, but also to improving the life of the community generally.

The QAVS is the highest award given to local volunteer groups across the UK to recognise outstanding work in their communities. The Awards were created in 2002 to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee and winners are announced each year on 2 June – the anniversary of the Queen's Coronation. The BFPG was one of 187 charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive this prestigious award this year. The Group was listed on Page 10 to Supplement 61244 of *The London Gazette* dated 2 June with the citation "Protecting the residents of Bodenham Parish from flooding by a range of measures, and providing support to vulnerable individuals."

The presentation of the Award took place on Friday, 23 October in the Parish Hall and was attended by 25 official guests representing agencies and organisations which have supported the Group and 58 members of the Parish Council and of the BFPG with their partners. The Countess of Darnley, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Herefordshire, who was accompanied by Lord Darnley, presented the Chairman, on behalf of the Group, with the Award certificate and a piece of English Crystal engraved with the QAVS logo. (The Group now has permission to use the official logo (at the head of this Report) on its publications and website). Speeches were made by Mr Jeremy Millar, the former Ward Councillor, by Air Vice Marshal Michael Smart DL, who read the citation for the Award, by Lady Darnley, and by the Chairman.

Following the short ceremony all those present were welcomed to a reception with the opportunity to meet the Lord Lieutenant and other guests and to view a display of photographs illustrating the work of the BFPG since its formation.

## **SUMMARY**

It has become customary to end the Annual Report with the words "once again, this has been a busy and most successful year for the Group", but never has this been truer than this year, with receipt of HM The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service as the BFPG's crowning achievement. Although we are a self-help group, we could not have got this far through our own efforts alone and our sincere thanks must go to Balfour Beatty and to the River Lugg Internal Drainage Board for their support, as well as to Mr Rod Hawnt and the Hydro-Logic Group for their continued and generous maintenance of the telemetry system. However, at the risk of repeating what has been said many times before, the key to the continued success of the Group has been the enthusiasm and hard work of its members. Accordingly, the greatest thanks go to all those who have continued to support the Group, whether by taking an active part in working party sessions, by attending and contributing to meetings, by helping to organise social events, or by lending their support in any other way.

K.A.M.

### **St Michael & All Angels' Church, Bodenham**

The good news from the Parish Church is that repairs to the East End of the Church are about to commence and hopefully will take about a month.

We continue to have services each Sunday and are very fortunate to cover them all with the Vicar, plus help from retired vicars. Evensong is taken by a rota of Evensong-Takers. All services can be found on the Parish Website ([www.bodenhamparish.org.uk](http://www.bodenhamparish.org.uk)) and in the Village *Newsletter*.

We welcome weddings, baptisms and, sadly, funerals. We have uplifting services, *i.e.* Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Sunday with laying of wreaths at the Memorial, Christmas time with Carols and Midnight Service. We offer refreshments of coffee for morning services, special events and funerals.

Church links with St Michael's School, with the 'Prayers to Share' book - by which the book travels between the Church and School, each writing prayers which are read both at church services and school assemblies each week. School end of term services are in church; very good and well organised too.

Various charities supported by the Church are Christian Aid, Children's Society, Food Bank and Royal British Legion. Our Christmas Appeal last year was for Muheza Hospice Movement in Tanzania (Richard and Karilyn Collin's Project).

We continue to support the Thursday Café at the Chapel offering practical and spiritual support to our friends.

We appreciate the contribution from the Parish Council to help with the upkeep of the cemetery.

Fund Raising continues. This year we have had the Ceilidh and now have The Classical Concert on 14th May in Leominster Priory, The Open Gardens on 30th/31st July with plant sale, cakes etc., Barbecue & Jazz on 20th August, and Christmas Bazaar on 3rd December. In addition, the Church Fund Raising Committee is very happy for anyone to offer support in whatever way they can - even organise your own events.

All new comers to the Village receive a "Welcome Card" from St Michael & All Angels and anyone knowing of new residents to the Parish please let me know.

Liz Davies

### Bodenham Tennis Club Report 2015-16

Bodenham Tennis Club is affiliated to the Herefordshire & Worcestershire Lawn Tennis Association. It has two hard courts with one floodlit and is situated at the rear of the Parish Hall, which contains our Club room. Last year we had 64 adult and senior members and 22 juniors most of whom enjoyed our Club nights on a Thursday, and ladies' nights on a Tuesday.

We entered 3 men's teams and 2 lady's teams in the county Summer Leagues, and 2 men's and 1 ladies' in the Winter Leagues. Two of the teams gained promotion.

Several Junior coaching sessions were held on Saturdays during the year.

We have recently opened our own website

<https://www.lta.org.uk/play/venues/venue-details/?externalId=1-14H-217>

David Marriott (Treasurer)