

**BODENHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING AT THE SIWARD JAMES  
CENTRE AT 7.00 PM ON MONDAY, 14<sup>th</sup> MAY 2012**

**Attendance**

Cllr Derek Ling (Chair)  
Cllr Bob Clarke  
Cllr Stan Davis  
Cllr Pam James-Moore  
Cllr Robin Knott  
Cllr Tony Mitcheson  
Cllr Jeff Pollard  
Cllr Rhian Powell

Cllr Jeremy Millar (District Councillor)

Mr Chris Smith (Clerk)

8 members of the public were present.

**ITEM**

**AGENDA ITEM 1:**

1. No apologies were received.

**AGENDA ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

2. No declarations of interest in were received.

**AGENDA ITEM 3 – MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

3. The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**AGENDA ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

4. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**AGENDA ITEM 5 – THE CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

5. Cllr Ling presented the Chairman’s report, which is attached as Annex A.

**AGENDA ITEM 6 – REPORTS FROM LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS**

6. A report on the activities of Bodenham Chapel had been prepared by Mr David Hills. It was delivered by Mrs Gwen Bowden.
7. A report on the activities of Bodenham Flood Protection Group had been prepared by Cllr Mitcheson and was delivered by him. The report is attached as Annex B.
8. Mrs Gwen Bowden also talked about Bodenham Leisure Club.

**AGENDA ITEM 7 – COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

9. No comments were made by members of the public.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.15pm.

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING AT THE SIWARD JAMES  
CENTRE AT 7.00 PM ON MONDAY, 14<sup>th</sup> MAY 2012**

**AGENDA ITEM 8 – ELECTION OF NEW CHAIRMAN**

10. The Clerk invited nominations for the post of Chairman of the Parish Council. Cllr Ling was nominated by Cllr Knott and was seconded by Cllr Davis. Cllr Ling was duly elected.

**AGENDA ITEM 9 – ELECTION OF NEW VICE CHAIRMAN**

11. The Clerk invited nominations for the post of Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council. Cllr Knott was nominated by Cllr James-Moore and was seconded by Cllr Davis. Cllr Knott was duly elected.

**AGENDA ITEM 10 – MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

12. The minutes were accepted as a correct record of the meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM 11 – MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

13. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**AGENDA ITEM 11 – ACCOUNTS FOR 2011/12**

14. Cllr Ling presented the annual accounts, which were approved unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM 12 – ELECTION OF PARISH HALL REPRESENTATIVE**

15. Cllr Jackson was nominated by Cllr Knott and seconded by Cllr Mitcheson. Cllr Jackson was duly elected.

**AGENDA ITEM 13 – ELECTION OF EMERGENCY/FLOODING REPRESENTATIVE**

16. Cllr Mitcheson was nominated by Cllr Knott and seconded by Cllr Powell. Cllr Mitcheson was duly elected.

**AGENDA ITEM 14 – ANNUAL GRANTS**

17. It was agreed that the following grants would be paid:

1. £800 to the Parish hall
2. £600 to the Church for the upkeep of the churchyard
3. £50 to the British Legion in lieu of a new wreath.

**AGENDA ITEM 15 – APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR**

18. The Clerk reported that the annual audit had to be completed by the end of June and that it was necessary to appoint an internal auditor as part of the process. It was agreed that Mr Paul Hemmings should be asked to act as internal auditor.

**AGENDA ITEM 16 – DATES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS 2012/13**

19. The Clerk presented a list of Parish Council Meeting dates for 2012-13, which is attached as Annex D.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.

**Chairman's Report for 2011-12**

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Our first year of the current term is complete, we have achieved a great deal in this year and I am looking forward to next year already. The parish plan will be published soon and we aim to support the action plan where we can and hope that everyone gets involved.

We continue to concentrate on key areas in the parish, planning, highways, speeding, environmental and leisure. We have set up several sub groups which deal with these issues in detail and efficiently. We now have a lengthsman and you should have seen more grass being cut around the village.

I would like to thank all of the councillors, sub groups and volunteers for all of their hard work and commitment which makes our Parish a better place in which to live.

Derek Ling  
Chairman

**BODENHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP  
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2011-12**

2011-12 has been an extremely busy and outstandingly successful year for the Bodenham Flood Protection Group (BFPG).

**Meetings and Flood Protection Working Parties.**

It goes almost without saying that during the year the Group's activities have centred round its Meetings in the Siward James Centre, at which issues have been discussed, plans developed and decisions made. At the Annual General Meeting in August Mrs Tricia Sanford stood down as Chairman after two very successful years in office and Cllr Tony Mitcheson took over that role, while Mrs Babs Mitcheson agreed to continue as Secretary. At the same time Mr Tony Clark relinquished the job of Operations Manager, but kindly agreed to remain as Treasurer. His role as Operations Manager was assumed by Mr Mike Stephens and Mr Robin George agreed to become his Deputy. Mrs Burnill and Mrs Evans also volunteered to join the Area Representative network. The full list of appointments is at Annex A.

Throughout the year, with the exception of December, the Group has continued to meet regularly on the last Tuesday of each month, each Meeting being attended by 25-30 of the 60 or so members, each Meeting being minuted with the Minutes published on the Parish Website, and each Meeting being followed by a report to the Parish Council. Between April and October the Group has also continued with the most important part of its work, the maintenance of watercourses in working party sessions held every alternate Friday. During the Summer a large part of the drainage system across Mr Pugh's field to the west of Orchard Close was cleared and the remaining section was sprayed by Mr Stephens with the result that it recently took only a couple of sessions to tidy up what had appeared a few months previously to be an impenetrable mass of brambles. The ditches in Chapel Lane and Ketch Lane were cleaned out again and virtually the whole of the Millcroft Brook from the Golf Course down to the River Lugg was cleared of vegetation. This work was greatly helped by the dry weather which caused the Brook to dry out along most of its length. Once more a key task was dredging accumulated silt from the old (East) culvert at the Millcroft Road/ Ketch Lane junction. The importance of this cannot be overstated because, as the recent rain has demonstrated yet again, the culverts lack the capacity, even when clean, to cope with the flow coming down the Millcroft Brook in severe weather.

**Pride of Herefordshire Award.**

Quite unexpectedly, all our efforts and hard work in previous years was given outside recognition when in September the Group was short-listed as one of three nominees in the 'Environmental Champions' category of the 2011 Pride of Herefordshire Awards. The Chairman and Secretary attended the Awards ceremony in Hereford on 12 October and even more unexpectedly the BFPG were selected as the winners, with the Secretary collecting the trophy, certificate, a bottle of champagne and a cheque for £100.

## **‘Project Bodenham’.**

On 12 May 2011 we learnt that we had been successful in securing an Environment Agency grant of £144,500 to provide property-level flood protection measures for some 34 houses in the Parish. This was the start of ‘Project Bodenham’, which was managed by Amey Herefordshire on behalf of Herefordshire Council. The BFPG assumed the role of facilitators in the Project, doing our best to relieve Amey of as much of the administrative burden as possible by providing local knowledge, communication links between Amey and individual property owners, and an interface between the equipment manufacturers and individual residents. The aim of this was, first, to keep administrative costs down and thus ensure that as much as possible of the available funding was devoted to flood protection and, second, to make sure that the momentum of the Project was maintained. Given that across the country there were another 30 communities with similar grants competing for the attentions of the small number of equipment manufacturers, it was important that we ensured that we were at the head of the queue so that our equipment was installed before Christmas and not delayed into what could potentially be a harsh Winter. Furthermore, the Environment Agency had set 31 March 2012 as the date by which all work had to be completed and it was imperative that we did not find ourselves rushing to meet that deadline at the last minute.

After a meeting on 9 June at which members were briefed on the scheme by Herefordshire Council and Amey, some 40 properties were surveyed to determine which would qualify for a share in the funding. Each of the property owners involved received a survey report on their house at the end of July and from these reports Herefordshire Council produced a list of the 34 properties considered to qualify under the scheme.

The next stage was for the residents concerned to decide whether or not they wished to accept the scheme’s terms and conditions and, if so, to choose the flood protection equipment to be fitted to their houses. (Although the choice of types of equipment was limited to those recommended in the survey reports, residents were still free to choose between the products of different manufacturers). To facilitate this, we enlisted the help of Mrs Mary Dhonau, an independent consultant and formerly the CEO of the National Flood Forum. She helped to arrange a ‘private viewing’ exhibition of flood protection equipment in the Siward James Centre on 12 September at which ‘eligible’ residents could see and discuss what was available and then sit down with representatives of the surveyors and Amey and agree what specific makes of equipment they wished to have installed.

We were keen to ensure that all local residents - and not just those whose properties qualified for the Environment Agency funding – were able to see and, if they wished, purchase flood protection equipment for their houses. Mrs Dhonau generously agreed therefore to return on the following day (13 September) and give up her time without charge to advise anyone who wished to attend. Some 30 residents took advantage of this and, by subsequently making a bulk purchase of equipment, the BFPG has been able to procure a number of items at a discount for them.

Once those eligible for a share in the Environment Agency grant had decided what equipment they wished to have installed in their houses, Amey Herefordshire were able to negotiate with suppliers, arrange for them to carry out detailed surveys, establish costs, confirm that there was sufficient funding available to cover all the equipment required without the householders concerned having to make personal financial contributions, and finally place the necessary orders. This process was made easier because the great majority of residents had chosen UK Flood Barriers Limited as their preferred manufacturer. The firm could therefore be made the main contractor for supply and installation and this greatly simplified communications.

Bearing in mind the need, already mentioned, for swift action to ensure that we were ahead of other communities across the country in getting flood protection items ordered and installed, we had hoped that, with equipment decisions made in early September, it should be possible for installation to start in October. However, this was not to be and, for reasons which are not clear, there were

delays in Amey's procurement process and, in the event, installation did not commence until 21 November. Nevertheless, by Christmas 26 of the 34 eligible properties had received their protection measures.

On the face of it this was a considerable success. Unfortunately, as the Project had progressed it had become clear that the initial surveys carried out to establish which properties did, and did not, meet the Environment Agency criteria for funding did not always agree with the subsequent surveys carried out by UK Flood Barriers Limited. The original surveys appeared to have overlooked points of vulnerability in certain properties, to have excluded some other properties from the scheme altogether despite these having suffered damage in 2007, and to have caused uncertainty in other cases by not being sufficiently clear and precise in their findings. (It has to be said that in a few cases the reluctance of property owners to admit that they had, in fact, been flooded at all also caused some confusion and delay). As a result we identified six houses which we believed should either be added to the list of eligible properties, or which were on that list but needed additional measures to complete their flood protection. We expressed our concerns to the Environment Agency and were extremely grateful when the Agency agreed to provide additional funding to cover this extra work.

The situation in January was that eight properties from the initial list remained to be completed, together with the additional houses just mentioned, the latter coming to be known collectively as 'Phase 2'. The necessary surveys were carried out on 18 January and there seemed to be no reason why the installation work could not proceed swiftly afterwards; all the measurements had been taken, the costings were available and the funding had been allocated. However, for reasons which are not clear, there followed a period during which, from the Group's perspective, communication with Amey Herefordshire became difficult and Amey's work on the Project appeared to have stalled. With the 31 March 2012 deadline fast approaching, we therefore turned for help to our District Councillor, Cllr Jeremy Millar, who arranged a meeting with the Watchkeeper-in-Chief at Amey, Ms Ruth Kinsella.

This took place on 23 February and was attended by Cllr Millar and the Chairman BFPG. At it the latter was able to express the Group's concerns. Ms Kinsella undertook to investigate the situation within Amey and meanwhile agreed that a letter would be sent to each householder in the scheme giving them an individual progress report on the Project. Regrettably it took over a month for these letters to reach residents and, when they did appear, they were factually incorrect in a number of ways. They were accompanied by a draft 'overall report' which confirmed the good news that the Environment Agency had agreed that the 31 March deadline no longer applied, but which, crucially, was incorrect in its listing of the properties included in 'Phase 2'.

Following further correspondence and a transfer of responsibility for the Project within Amey, the list was rectified, orders for the remaining flood protection equipment were finally placed with UK Flood Barriers, and installation is now at long last beginning to proceed again. However, as was predictable - and, indeed predicted - the failure, despite all our urging, to move the Project forward over the last few months has meant that it is now subject to further manufacturing delays and it is unlikely that all installation work will be complete much before the end of May, some two months late.

### **Flood Warning Telemetry System.**

As if being awarded the Environment Agency Grant was not enough, the 'icing on the cake' came when Mr Rod Hawnt of Hydro-Logic Limited announced that he was donating a state of the art flood warning telemetry system to the Parish. This was installed at the Brockington Road bridge on 9 May and was commissioned two days later. It will be invaluable to the whole community in Bodenham Moor during periods of severe weather, because the early warning of possible flash flooding it will provide, will give us time to put our flood precautions in place. On other occasions it may serve to reassure us that, contrary to appearances, flooding is not actually imminent and we do not need to

take any action.

### **The Parish Plan.**

Almost alone amongst the Parish's clubs, societies and other groups, the BFPG made a submission to the development of the Parish Plan and, although the Plan has not yet been published, we understand that it will endorse the Group's recommendations that, first, the Parish should continue to press Herefordshire Council to discharge fully its responsibilities for the regular and complete maintenance of drains, culverts and watercourses across the Parish and, second, that a long term aim for the Parish should be to reduce the risk of flash flooding to Bodenham Moor by the replacement of the Ketch Lane culverts with a box culvert, as has been recommended by two separate hydrology reports.

### **Flood Protection Initiatives with the Wider Community.**

As already mentioned, we were concerned that the benefits of flood protection should not be limited to those fortunate enough to be included in the Environment Agency scheme. We therefore suggested to Herefordshire Council the need for a flood protection 'open day' which would be available to everyone across the County and, indeed, beyond. This initiative eventually came to fruition in an Exhibition organised by Mrs Dhonau and held in the Parish Hall on 7 November, at which a number of firms were able to display their flood protection products to about 100 visitors. The event was jointly funded by Herefordshire Council and the Environment Agency and also acted as the launch of the 2012 *Know Your Flood Risk* Campaign. BFPG members provided refreshments, car parking and other administrative support throughout the day and it concluded in the evening with an Open Forum discussion on flood insurance, a subject of increasing concern bearing in mind that the present agreement between the Government and the insurance industry is due to end in 2013. This had an audience of a further 100 visitors.

The BFPG's interactions with communities outside Bodenham have not been limited to this Exhibition. During the past twelve months we have been approached by two other parishes in Herefordshire interested in learning how we established the Group and seeking advice on what self-help measures they might be able to adopt themselves. In the case of Brimfield & Little Hereford we sent representatives to a meeting in their Parish Hall on 25 August, at which we gave a presentation alongside talks from the Environment Agency and Amey Herefordshire. Some members of Brimfield Parish Council also visited one of our monthly meetings and witnessed one of our working party sessions. Finally, with the Environment Agency and Mrs Dhonau we were also represented at a meeting on 29 November at which Brimfield residents agreed to form a flood protection group, a decision which, we understand, was endorsed by their Parish Council in January.

Finally under this heading, it is worth mentioning that the Secretary was invited to attend a meeting of a Defra Steering Group in London on 10 January to discuss a draft report on the implementation of the first two phases of government investment in property-level protection across the country in 2009-10. Although this did not cover Bodenham, which is in the third phase, the Secretary was present to represent the point of view of communities and residents generally, which she did with her accustomed forcefulness.

### **ITV's *Tonight* Programme.**

On 11 May 2012 we received a visit from Jonathan Maitland and a team from ITV who were preparing a programme on climate change. They spent the afternoon filming the installation of flood protection measures at 40, Brockington Road by UK Flood Barriers Limited, where they met the CEO, Mrs Sarah Vaughan. Also in Brockington Road they met Mr Rod Hawnt of Hydro-Logic

Limited, who had just finished commissioning the flood warning telemetry system there. At The Forge they interviewed Mrs Dhonau on flood insurance issues and at Millcroft Farm Mr Maitland interviewed the Secretary at some length on the origins and work of the Group. The team were also introduced to the Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Derek Ling, and to our District Council, Cllr Jeremy Millar. Finally, they filmed the regular Friday evening work party session at the Ketch Lane culverts where Mr Maitland donned a set of waders and personally contributed to the removal of silt from the brook.

The results are due to be shown on ITV's *Tonight* programme at 7.30pm on 17 May 2012 and, given that the 22 minute climate change 'slot' will be covering other places at risk of flooding besides Bodenham, it will be interesting to see how much of our work makes it to air and how much ends up in the editing room recycling bin.

### **Fund-Raising and Social Events.**

During the course of the year the Group has held its annual social evenings, comprising a barbecue kindly hosted by Mr and Mrs Nickols at the Forge on 3 September and a Bonfire Party on 15 October at Millcroft Farm. There were also three very successful fund-raising events in the form of an Open Gardens day on 12 June at which Group members raised £122.50 from the sale of refreshments, the annual Quiz Night in the Parish Hall on 12 November which raised £558, and the Coffee Morning at the Seward James Centre on 4 February 2012 which brought in £430.

### **BFPG Finances.**

Thanks to these fund-raising events, to which many members devoted a great deal of time and, in some cases, personal expense, and thanks also to a number of donations throughout the year, the BFPG has been able to purchase a brushcutter, five heavy duty loppers and various other much-needed items of equipment while still leaving the Group's account £1,791-24 in credit.

### **Conclusion.**

This has been an extraordinarily successful year for the Group, during which every member has made a significant contribution, whether by helping at a working party session, being an area representative, helping with the Group's administration, organising one or more fund-raising events, making cakes, dispensing refreshments, doing the washing up, acting as a car parking attendant, donating an item for sale, or simply just turning up at an event or at monthly meetings to show support. I believe that they deserve the gratitude and thanks of the community at large and they certainly have mine.

K.A.M.

May 2012

**BFPG COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND AREA REPRESENTATIVES 2011-12**

Chairman:	Cllr Tony Mitcheson
Treasurer:	Mr Tony Clark
Operations Manager:	Mr Mike Stephens
Deputy Operations Manager:	Mr Robin George
Secretary:	Mrs Babs Mitcheson

**The Moor**

The Moor Road:	Mr Tony Clark
Orchard Close:	Mr Graham Price
Chapel Lane:	Mr Robert Pritchard
Brockington Road (2 -31& 35):	Mr Simon Dowler
Brockington Road (1, 32-34, 36 – 42A):	Mrs Rebecca Burnill
Brockington Road (43- 54):	Mrs Gwen Bowden
Siward James:	Mrs Iris Evans
Ash Grove Close:	Mrs Jean Fryer
Ash Grove View:	Mr David Harris
Millcroft Road:	Mrs Barbara Gibson

**Bodenham Village**

Bridge to War Memorial:	Mr Simon Nickols
Church and Bodenham Village:	Mr David Ayshford Sanford
	Mr Mike Mullenger