

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
AT THE SIWARD JAMES CENTRE  
AT 7.00 PM ON MONDAY, 12<sup>th</sup> MAY 2014**

**Present:** Cllr Bob Clarke, Cllr Roger Austin, Cllr Alec Avery, Cllr Stan Davis, Cllr Dennis Jackson, Cllr Pam James-Moore, Cllr Tony Mitcheson (Chair), Cllr Jeff Pollard, Cllr Rhian Powell.

District Cllr Jeremy Millar was also present. 12 members of the public were present at the start of the Meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence.** No apologies for absence were received.
2. **Declarations of Interest.** Cllr Powell declared an interest in Item 27. Cllr Austin declared an interest in Item 28.
3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting.** The Minutes of the previous Meeting were accepted as a correct record (Proposer; Cllr Austin: Seconder; Cllr Clarke).
4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes.**
  - 4.1 **Minute 6.1: Noticeboards.** The Clerk reported that the new noticeboard had been installed. Cllr Clarke added that Mr Roland Hunt had given permission for the old noticeboard to be installed outside the post office when it had been refurbished
  - 4.2 **Minute 6.7: Repairs to the Mounting Block.** Cllr Pollard reported that he had been unable to contact a contractor about repairing the mounting block, but would pursue the matter. **ACTION: JP**
  - 4.3 **Minute 7.1: Bus Consultation.** The Clerk reported that he had submitted a response to the consultation on behalf of the Parish Council. The Clerk noted that the proposed changes to the 426 service are to reduce the frequency of services to Bodenham from every 60 minutes to every 90 minutes and to cut the services to Leominster completely.
  - 4.4 **Minute 8.2: Road Safety.** Cllr Clarke reported that the meeting with Justine Heath of Balfour Beatty had taken place and that a number of possible improvements had been discussed, about which Ms Heath would report back in due course.
  - 4.5 **Minute 10.1: Audit.** The Clerk reported that Mr Paul Hemming had agreed to act as internal auditor.
  - 4.6 **Minute 11.4: Defibrillator.** Cllr Powell reported that she was in the process of establishing the cost of a defibrillator training course. Cllr Mitcheson asked whether sufficient numbers would be interested in taking the course. Cllr Powell said that, after having spoken to the Bodenham Women's Group and others, she was sure that there would be a viable number.
5. **Opportunity for Members of the Public to Address the Parish Council.**
  - 5.1 Mrs Gwen Bowden reported that the 40mph sign on the A417 on the approach to Bodenham from the Leominster direction is obscured by foliage. The Clerk was instructed to report this. **ACTION: CS**
  - 5.2 Mrs Bowden asked for signs on electricity posts to be removed. Cllr Mitcheson said that anyone could remove such signs. The Clerk was instructed to place an item in the next Newsletter about this. **ACTION: CS**
  - 5.3 Mr Tony Clark reported that the fly-tipped rubbish in Smeadals Lane, which he had reported earlier, had not been removed and that the gratings on the C1125 near to Eastfields Farm, which he had also previously reported, had not been replaced. The Clerk said that he had reported both defects and would do so again. **ACTION: CS**

**6. Councillors' Reports on the Parish Plan.**

6.1 **Road Safety.** See Minute 4.5.

6.2 **Communications.** Cllr Mitcheson reported that Mr Richard Horlock, who managed the Parish Website, had moved to a new job, but would continue to manage the website until a replacement could be found. Cllr Mitcheson said that he would try to find a replacement for Mr Horlock, as did Cllr Avery. **ACTION: TM and AA**

6.3 **Health.** See Minute 4.7.

6.4 **Leisure.** Cllr Austin said that he had nothing to report.

**7. Report from the Footpaths Officers.**

7.1 Cllr Mitcheson summarized the Report submitted by the Footpaths Officers - Mr Paul and Mrs Val Russell. The report is attached as Annex A. Cllr Mitcheson thanked Mr and Mrs Russell for their Report, but noted with regret that they have resigned as footpath officers. The Clerk was instructed to send the report to the Public Rights of Way section of Herefordshire Council. **ACTION: CS**

7.2 Cllr Powell reported that no action has been taken for over two years to complete the reinstatement of the Bodenham to Preston Wynne bridleway, and that a gate has been installed across the bridleway at one point. The Clerk was instructed to report this and to ask about a timescale for the reinstatement. **ACTION: CS**

**8. Report on the Trees on the Village Green.**

8.1 The Clerk noted that the Report on the trees on the village green prepared by Mr Adrian Hope of Adrian Hope Tree Services had made recommendations for an inspection regime for the trees, some of which might require attention in the not too distant future. The Report was adopted and the Clerk was instructed to accept Mr Hope's recommendations. **ACTION: CS**

8.2 The Clerk reported that one recommendation in Mr Hope's Report was for a parish councillor to periodically make a visual inspection of the trees and to report any changes to them. Cllr Austin volunteered to do this. **ACTION: RA**

**9. Councillors' Expenses.**

9.1 The Clerk reported that a letter had been received from Herefordshire Council asking the Parish Council to consider whether they wished to introduce a system of allowances for their parish councillors. There was general agreement that, while out of pocket expenses should be refunded as was now the practice, Councillors did not wish to have allowances. Cllr Millar said that Herefordshire Council was required to ask this question from time to time. The Clerk was instructed to find out whether it was necessary to respond to the letter. **ACTION: CS**

**10. Finance.**

10.1 **Monthly Accounts Statements.** Cllr Knott had prepared the monthly accounts, but consideration of them was deferred until the annual audit had been completed. The accounts are attached as Annex B.

10.2 It was agreed that, following the resignation of Cllr Knott, the Clerk would prepare the monthly accounts in future. **ACTION: CS**

10.3 It was agreed that the following outstanding invoices should be paid (Proposer, Cllr Austin: Secunder, Cllr Davis).

- Clerk's expenses (Printer Cartridges and Stamps)	£16.92
- DC Gardening Services (Lengthsman)	£270.00
- Zurich Insurance (Annual Premium)	£503.98
- Mr J Pollard (Purchase of Stone Setts)	£26.00
- Leominster Community Resource Centre (April and May <i>Newsletters</i> )	£336.50
- Bodenham Parish Hall (Room hire)	£15.00

**11. Planning.**

11.1 The following planning applications were considered:

- **141014: Eastfields Farm: Proposed Slurry Separator.** Mr David Tilford had prepared a planning statement, which is attached as Annex C. He said that, although there were inconsistencies between the application and previous related applications, the only issue is the possible noise made by the slurry separator. Mr Richard Pugh said that the pump would be electric and virtually noiseless. Cllr Powell asked whether a top could be placed on the existing slurry tank, given that the movement of the slurry therein causes smell. Mr Pugh said that overhead power lines prevented a top being installed. It was agreed that the application be recommended for approval, subject to the condition that the pump should not produce an unreasonable level of noise (Proposer, Cllr Clarke: Seconder, Cllr Powell).
- **141052: Berrington Cottage, The Moor: Proposed Single Storey Extension.** It was agreed that the application be recommended for approval (Proposer, Cllr Clarke: Seconder, Cllr Pollard).
- **140914: Field South of Rowberry Lane: Proposed Building for Agricultural Use.** Mr David Tilford said that the application was a “prior notification” on which comments were not being invited.
- **140468: Baches Bargains: Proposed construction of a 36m x 6m Building and a 24m x 6m Building to be Used as Workshop/Storage Units.** Mr Tony Troia spoke about the application, for which Mr David Tilford had prepare a planning statement, which is attached as Annex D. Mr Tilford asked about the provision of drainage for the proposed buildings. Mr Troia said that a soakaway would be provided. Cllr Mitcheson asked about removing the unsightly signs to Baches’ Bargains on the A417. Mr Troia was non-committal about removing the signs. It was agreed that the application be recommended for approval subject to the conditions in Mr Tilford’s statement (Proposer, Cllr Clarke: Seconder, Cllr Jackson).

## 12. Updates.

12.1 **Bodenham Flood Protection Group.** Cllr Mitcheson tabled the Group’s Annual Report and gave its monthly report, which are attached as Annexes E and F respectively.

### 12.2 Parish Hall.

12.2.1 Cllr Powell reported that the Meeting scheduled for 7th May had been postponed until 14th May. The Agenda includes:

- improvements to lighting
- installation of solar panels
- planning for Arts Alive
- planning for Flicks In the Sticks

12.2.2 Cllr Millar said that Herefordshire Council is putting resources into solar electricity and may be able to assist.

12.2.3 Cllr Mitcheson noted that he had been given photographs and other material relating to the Parish Hall for the Parish Website, but was awaiting a decision on how they should be laid out. He asked that the Parish Hall Management Committee should decide this at its Meeting.

12.2.4 Mrs Gwen Bowden reported that she had hung an old Ordnance Survey map in the committee room.

12.3 **Lengthsman.** The Clerk reported that the Lengthsman would cut the grass on the village green in between the three cuts per year done by Balfour Beatty instead of the seven done formerly. The Clerk said that an item would be placed in the *June Newsletter* asking for him to be notified of requests for jobs for the Lengthsman. Cllr Davis requested that the vegetation along Millcroft Road next to the brook be strimmed to improve visibility for vehicles. The Clerk undertook to ask the Lengthsman. **ACTION: CS**

## 13. Correspondence not Previously Circulated.

13.1 The Clerk reported that there was no correspondence which had not been circulated previously.

## 14. Other Business (including District Councillor’s Comments).

14.1 Cllr Millar’s latest report is attached as Annex B.

14.2 The Clerk said that the Electoral Services section of Herefordshire Council would be notified of the vacancy, which had arisen following the resignation of Cllr Knott and that the vacancy would be advertised and filled according to their procedures.

15. **Date of Next Meeting.**

The next meetings will be held on 2nd June  
7th July and  
4th August

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.15pm.

## **Footpath Officers' Report**

### **Parish Footpath Officer (PFO)**

Following a meeting with Rachel Dixon, Area Rights of Way Warden, in June 2013 when we agreed to trial the joint role of Parish Footpath Officer, we received a formal letter of appointment dated 26<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

We agreed to trial the role intending to combine our dog walking with checking the footpaths and bridleways over a period of months or years.

Subsequent exploration of a number of the footpaths and bridleways designated within the Bodenham Parish have convinced us that the two activities are not compatible in this locality.

The principle reason for this is the grazing of dairy cattle and calves in fields containing footpaths.

We were chased out of such pastures on several occasions due most probably to having dogs with us.

Winter walking is the alternative but is often heavy going and not particularly inviting.

It has not been possible to obtain advice and support from the Area Rights of Way Warden during the period. This was due to the switch from Amey to Balfour Beatty and until recently no contact details could be obtained.

Following this report we will resign the role of joint PFO's

### ***Footpaths Report***

#### Footpath BM3

This footpath begins by leaving the road from Bodenham just after passing the entrance to Bodenham Manor and climbs through the woodland under Dinmore Hill until joining the bridleway BM1 near a point called "Henhouse" on the parish rights of way map.

- A fallen tree approximately 20meters from the road has to be climbed over and the brambles at this point are an obstacle.
- At the point of the first way-marker the steps made here are in disrepair and hard to negotiate.
- The path joins a track which appears no longer in use and finding the true path of the footpath is problematic. Eventually a route was found to the fields and BM1 located.

#### Bridleway BM1

- No way-marker or sign as to the true junction of BM1 and BM3.
- Dairy cattle and calves prevented walking the line of the bridleway until safely over cattle grid.
- Overhanging branches in woodland section would be problematic for horse riders.
- Warning sign "Cows and calves in field" has been fixed at Bodenham Court gateway. Replaced damaged way-marker on stile at this point.

#### Footpath BM22

This footpath connects bridleway FL9 with the cul-de-sac lane at Upper Maund Farm.

- Stile at junction with FL9 and BM22 in reasonable order but way-marker vandalised. New way-marker fixed to stile.

- Path is good and passable to the paths end at farm but prevented from checking stile and waymarkers due to cows and calves in pasture.

Report of blocked stile on BM14 or BM7 at approximately grid reference 529 507

- BM 14 was walked from the Lugg footbridge near the church to its crossing of Smedal Lane (?) The path was clear the stiles in the lane in good repair and waymarked.
- BM7 was checked up to the top of Ashgrove wood and no problems found
- BM6 was checked. The replacement of an existing fence at the corner of Ashgrove Wood. The new fence in pig netting has been carried across the stile rather than braking at the stile. This allows people to cross but prevents access for dogs. Suspect this may be the origin of the report.

Footpaths report ends.

## Bodenham Parish Council 13/14

	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
<b>Income</b>												
PC Opening Balance	5045.87	9526.56	8004.99	6938.22	7444.81	10750.99	16357.62	15939.42	13898.7	12679.62	12370.06	12514.2
Newsletter	114.50	112.50	197.50	463.00	77.50	424.59	180.6	284	0	230	470	209.5
Vat Refund												
Car Park Loan		374.92						374.91				
Lengthsman				778.25		778.25			778.25			
Community Tech Grant			306.54									
Community Dev Grant					3982.00							
Precept	4972.50					4972.50						7875.75
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10132.87</b>	<b>10013.98</b>	<b>8509.03</b>	<b>8179.47</b>	<b>11504.31</b>	<b>16926.33</b>	<b>16538.22</b>	<b>16598.33</b>	<b>14676.95</b>	<b>12909.62</b>	<b>12840.06</b>	<b>20599.45</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>												
Car Park Loan		749.83						749.83				
Church Grant								1000				
Clerk Salary	121.29	121.29	121.29	121.29	121.29	121.29	121.29	121.29	121.29	121.29	121.29	431.29
Clerk Expenses	47.17		19.00	283.00	33.36	13.00	127.19	52.00	26.47	27.95	36.00	
HM Rev and Customs	30.32	30.32	30.32	30.32	30.32	30.32	30.32	30.32	30.32	30.32	30.32	30.32
Insurance		499.96										
Website							40	200				
Newsletter	407.53	200.25	186.60	159.85	0.00	169.10		381.19	191.25		18.00	
Playground repairs											65.25	
Community Dev Grant					67.50							
Room Hire					65.25		15		63		55	
Lengthsman		395.00	594.60	140.20	245.00	235.00	265	115	365	360		463.4
Playground Inspection					40.60							
Audit					150.00							
Parish Hall Grant									1200			
Grass Cutting			583.00									
Parish Plan												114
Neighbourhood Plan		12.34										100
Telemetry System			36.00									
Signs												148.9
Dog bin												
British Legion Grant								50				
<b>TOTAL PC Expenditure</b>	<b>606.31</b>	<b>2008.99</b>	<b>1570.81</b>	<b>734.66</b>	<b>753.32</b>	<b>568.71</b>	<b>598.8</b>	<b>2699.63</b>	<b>1997.33</b>	<b>539.56</b>	<b>325.86</b>	<b>1287.91</b>
<b>PC Closing Balance</b>	<b>9526.56</b>	<b>8004.99</b>	<b>6938.22</b>	<b>7444.81</b>	<b>10750.99</b>	<b>16357.62</b>	<b>15939</b>	<b>13899</b>	<b>12680</b>	<b>12370</b>	<b>12514</b>	<b>19311.54</b>
BFBPG Open Balance	2210.27	2210.27	2113.37	2099.87	2058.88	2058.88	2058.88	2412.07	2412.07	2412.07	2760.07	2815.07

	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
BFPG Inc				30.00			494			375	55	
BFPG Ex		96.90	13.50	70.99			140.81			27		
BFPG Closing Balance	2210.27	2113.37	2099.87	2058.88	2058.88	2058.88	2412.07	2412.07	2412.07	2760.07	2815.07	2815.07
LADY Close Orchard	158.00	158.00	158.00	158.00	158.00	158.00	158.00	158.00	158.00	158.00	158.00	158.00
BLHG						190.00	190.00	190.00	190.00	190.00	190.00	190.00
<b>Tot Closing Balance</b>	<b>11894.83</b>	<b>10276.36</b>	<b>9196.09</b>	<b>9661.69</b>	<b>12967.87</b>	<b>18764.50</b>	<b>18699.49</b>	<b>16658.77</b>	<b>15439.69</b>	<b>15478.13</b>	<b>15677.27</b>	<b>22474.61</b>



**141014: Eastfields Farm: Proposed Slurry Separator: Planning Statement**

Bodenham Parish Council notes that the proposal appears to comply with UDP policy E13 Agricultural and Forestry Development – allowing a presumption in favour providing the proposal is well related to existing development and Policy E16 – Intensive Livestock Units -providing, among other things, the amenity of neighbouring residential properties is protected.

The Council does not, therefore, object to the proposal. However, noting the potential for noise and odour nuisance that may be generated when the pumps and other machinery associated with the separator are in operation it is requested that any consent be suitably conditioned to protect the amenity of neighbouring residential properties by reason of noise and odour. It is also requested that the hours of operation of the separator be limited to the hours 07.30 hrs to 19.30 hrs.

**140468: Baches Bargains: Proposed construction of a 36m x 6m Building and a 24m x 6m Building to be Used as Workshop/Storage Units: Planning Statement**

The two buildings proposed are 36x6m and 24x6m in size with simple pent roofs of approx.4m at the highest point. The walls and roofs will be clad in forest green steel box profile sheets. Each building will be divided into 6m square units. They will be located in the south-west corner of the site backing on to open farmland. The closest dwelling, number 54 Brockington Road, is some 43 metres from the nearest unit. Consent was given on 2 August 2013 for a caravan storage area, the conversion of existing lean-tos for business use and the laying of permeable surfacing.

**Planning Policy**

Para.28 of the National Planning Policy Framework promotes the sustainable growth of all types of businesses in rural areas and the retention of local services in villages. UDP Policy E6 – Expansion of Existing Businesses - states that the extension of an operation will be permitted where it can be accommodated within the existing site and is of a suitable scale and design for the locality. Policy E8 is concerned with design standards for employment sites and the need to fully consider residential amenity by imposing conditions if necessary. Policy DR7- Flood Risk seeks to prevent development from increasing flood risk elsewhere.

**Comment/Summary**

It is thought that the proposal is unlikely to impinge on the privacy or amenity of neighbouring dwellings and appears to confirm with planning policy. Nevertheless, it is suggested that the Parish Council should request that any consent the LPA may be minded to give be conditioned to

i] Limit the hours of use of the units from 07.30 to 19.30hrs ii] satisfy the Planning Authority that adequate steps are taken to provide a sustainable drainage system to cope with surface water run-off from the roof structures and only permeable hardstanding surfaces are employed to avoid exacerbating flood risk and iii] the applicant or his agent to arrange for the removal of all unauthorised signage adjacent to the A417 and other roads and require an undertaking to refrain from such unauthorised advertising signage in the future.

**BODENHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP**  
**REPORT TO THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**  
**(12 MAY 2014)**

**WATER LEVELS**

Throughout most of the past year water levels have remained low and have given no cause for concern. However, Bodenham did not escape the severe weather over the winter which caused widespread flooding in the Somerset Levels, the Thames Valley and elsewhere and which made 2013-14 one of the wettest years on record.

**Pluvial Flood Risk.**

The change came in December when the water level in the Millcroft Brook rose above 0.5m on 23 December, again on New Year's Day, and on several occasions in both January and February. The highest water level recorded by the telemetry system was 1.22m on 12 February, well below what has been achieved in the past and, while enough to bring the relief channel into operation, not sufficient to cause any real concern.

A more immediate issue in February was surface water flooding in Chapel Lane with water running off the adjacent fields and crossing the C1125 into the East end of Orchard Close. This highlighted one of the concerns about Bovis Homes' proposal to build houses on Shuker's Field and the situation on 11 and 12 February was only saved by two members of the Group spending hours wading in the water to ensure that the drains continued to operate and did not become clogged with debris.

On The Moor (C1125) there have also been times when surface water has come northwards from the fields on higher ground South of the Village and flooded across the road outside Eastfields. Here the problem has, again, been made worse by blocked drains, but in some cases the blockages have been such that there was nothing BFPG members could do and we have had to call on Balfour Beatty to jet them.

**Fluvial Flood Risk.**

Turning to the flood risk presented by the River Lugg, some gardens near the Bridge were partially flooded in mid-February, but, so far as is known, the only building affected was the Church where the kitchen had some water in it.

As in some previous years, the main issue was the Millcroft Lane/ Ketch Lane junction. Flood water from the River reached there over the period from Christmas Day until late on 4 January and then again over the periods 9-11 January and 6-17 February. The highest water level recorded on the road at the junction was 21 inches. As usual, 'Flood' warning signs were put out on Millcroft Road; as usual, they were largely ignored; as usual, a lot of drivers then spent a great deal of time practising their reversing; and, as usual, some who decided to chance their luck came to grief and had to be rescued.

It was pleasing to know that there were people outside Bodenham who were concerned for our safety. Cllr Jeremy Millar visited on 16 February and we had two visits from Mr Charles Pudge, the Chairman of the River Lugg Internal Drainage Board (IDB), and two from Mr Les Harrison, the Board's Engineer; indeed, all three have kept a watchful eye on our area throughout the year and we are grateful to the Board for once again supplying us with a quantity of herbicide for our maintenance work. During the flooding period Balfour Beatty were also encouragingly proactive

around the Village. They removed the debris from the Ketch Lane culverts which we had piled on the verge there. More importantly, they helped us to resolve a potentially serious issue by immediately responding to a request to remove a build-up of silt which was completely blocking one of the two culverts and had thus reduced an already inadequate system to half its capacity. They kindly diverted from another task and used a digger to clear enough of the silt bank from outside the old culvert to restore its flow.

### **FLOOD PRECAUTIONS**

As already mentioned, there was no occasion during the past winter when there was any serious concern about flooding in the Village itself. However, some of those with equipment provided under the 2011 Environment Agency grant did put up some of their barriers as a sensible precaution. A large number of sandbags were also deployed by individual householders, again purely as a precaution.

Having checked the stocks of sandbags during the Summer and made sure that they were in good condition, the Group was also involved in their redistribution as the winter progressed and particular stockpiles became depleted. Regrettably, but perhaps unsurprisingly, some residents had not responded to advice that they should plan ahead and this resulted in some last minute requests for sandbags and the need for entirely avoidable (and expensive) action to supply them. It also meant that by mid-February the reserve of sandbags had become unnecessarily low. Balfour Beatty have now supplied empty sandbags so that the Group can replace damaged sandbags over the next few months. However, they have not yet fully replaced the reserve of filled sandbags that we require and this remains a concern.

### **FLOOD RISK INSURANCE**

The 'Statement of Principle' was the agreement between the Government and the insurance industry under which insurers guaranteed to provide flood cover for all households in return for the Government undertaking to fund the construction of flood defences across the country. The agreement expired at the end of July and is to be replaced by a new arrangement termed 'Flood Re' in the Summer of 2015.

Meanwhile, insurers are continuing to meet their commitments to their existing customers under the 'Statement of Principle' arrangement. This means that they will continue to offer cover to existing customers where flood risk is not 'significant' according to the Environment Agency, or where the Government has announced plans to reduce flood risk below 'significant' within five years. Premiums and excesses will reflect the insurer's understanding of the flood risk.

It is to be hoped that this unsatisfactory situation will end soon, but for the time being the list of insurance agents specialising in flood risk prepared by Mrs Mary Dhonau remains extremely valuable to us.

### **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING**

On 8 April 2013 the Parish Council established a Steering Group to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for Bodenham. Over the next 8 months a draft Plan was prepared which, despite extensive publicity, attracted little attention from local residents. However, the situation changed in January when it became known that Bovis Homes planned to develop Shuker's Field in Bodenham Moor. This was followed by a planning application for the development of the field immediately South of this along The Moor. Given the potential of each proposal to increase the flood risk in the area, and particularly to Orchard Close, interest in the Neighbourhood Plan has significantly increased, with the possibility that future residential development may worsen the risk of flooding from surface water run-off being a major concern.

## **MEETINGS**

The Group's regular Meetings at the Siward James Centre on the last Tuesday of each month, except December, have continued to be well attended with 29 members present on average. The AGM was held in August as usual, when the committee members and area representatives for the next 12 months were elected and the Group's Constitution was updated with an annex setting out the responsibilities of area representatives.

## **WORKING PARTIES**

As in previous years, regular working party sessions were conducted on alternate Friday evenings throughout the 'season' from April to October in 2013 and resumed on 11 April this year. As always they were well attended, with some 12-15 members normally taking part. Through their efforts the Group again performed the important tasks of keeping the Millcroft Brook, the Ketch Lane culverts and the Orchard Close drainage system clear of vegetation, silt and debris, as well as checking, repairing and moving sandbags. In addition, the successful pump training instituted in 2013 has been repeated and courses were again held at Millcroft Farm on 12 April and 19 April to remind a total of 15 members how to operate the Group's pumps.

## **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 we continue to await a response.

### **Road Closures.**

During most Winters flooding affects the C1121, Ketch Lane and Smeadals Lane causing the closure of these roads for short periods. 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.

Being well aware that Herefordshire Council are facing severe financial and resource pressures, the Group have offered 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. We have 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. We await a response.

## **CONTACTS WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

### **The Cabinet Office.**

On 24 January we were contacted by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) at the Cabinet Office who were preparing a new website "designed to support Local Resilience Fora and Local Authorities across the country to further develop and inspire community resilience projects and groups in their own areas". A substantial section was to be focused on flooding and to illustrate community-based approaches, using examples of projects and flood protection groups from across the country.

The Cabinet Office asked the Group to approve a short paragraph on their CCS website linking to the Group's own section of the Bodenham Parish website. The CCS website went live in March and

the BFPG is shown in the Flooding part of a section of the website called 'Preparing for an Emergency'. The relevant URLs are:

- (i) Flooding and your community: [www.epcollege.com/community-hub/prepare-for-an-emergency/#section1\\_5](http://www.epcollege.com/community-hub/prepare-for-an-emergency/#section1_5)
- (ii) Full site through [www.epcollege.com/community-hub](http://www.epcollege.com/community-hub)

## **Defra.**

**Property-Level Protection (PLP) Report.** On 26 September we were approached by JBA Consulting, acting on behalf of Defra, for feedback on how the property-level flood protection equipment provided under the 2011 Environment Agency grant had worked during the Winter of 2012-13. Although none of the equipment in Bodenham had actually been tested by flooding, we responded at some length with comments, first, on the improvements which we felt could be made in the running of such projects and, second, on the place we felt such projects had in flood protection overall; our view is that, while PLP equipment is very important, for Bodenham the key is getting water away from the Village and into the river as fast as possible. In this, keeping the Millcroft Brook and other watercourses clear is vital, the relief channel plays a major part, and the main weakness continues to be the wholly inadequate culverts at the Millcroft Road/ Ketch Lane junction.

## **Defra Evidence Base on Flooding Insurance.**

On 14 January we were contacted by Mr Gareth Williams, a researcher working for Brook Lyndhurst, a research consultancy based in Cambridge. He was involved in a project called Flooding Social Science Evidence Synthesis, which is bringing together a range of evidence on flooding for Defra, and trying to identify gaps in the evidence that could inform further research. Part of this work was a case study looking at flood insurance, in terms of people's attitudes and behaviours regarding it, and also people's attitudes and behaviours to property-level protection in the light of flood insurance.

Mr Williams conducted two telephone interviews, one with the Chairman and a second with the Secretary, each lasting well over half an hour. Amongst other points we explained that, since the Environment Agency had recently issued a new flood risk map showing new computer-generated mapping of both river and surface flooding, there appeared to have been a sudden increase in property insurance premiums, regardless of the property's past history. We gave him as much information as we could and we also passed him on to Mrs Mary Dhonau, whom he has also subsequently interviewed.

The BFPG continues to encourage local residents to report any insurance issues, whether the imposition of a higher excess premium for flood risk or just a general increase of more than 10%. Obviously, the more information we are able to give to Defra and Mrs Dhonau, the more evidence they will have when negotiating with the insurance industry.

**Defra Pathfinder Projects.** We have heard from Mrs Dhonau that, partly as a result of what the BFPG has achieved, Defra has funded 13 pathfinder projects to encourage other communities to emulate the Group's work. Mrs Dhonau is now working on one of these projects in Northampton and, at her request, the Secretary has provided her with a list of the equipment that the Group use as an example of what may be needed.

**Convergent Volunteers Project.** On 28 April we were contacted by Mr Christopher Smith, a Research Assistant at Warwick University's Business School, who was engaged in a Defra-funded project looking at the involvement of volunteers in flood response. On 9 May he conducted a 1¼ hour long telephone interview with the Chairman and Secretary seeking their views on how best use can be made of 'convergent volunteers', *i.e.* those volunteers who turn up without prior warning to offer their help during a flooding emergency.

## **The Environment Agency.**

### **Research into Volunteering.**

In October we were asked by the Environment Agency if we would be willing to take part in a survey aimed at understanding what motivates people to volunteer and, in particular, to volunteer on water and flooding issues. After completing a lengthy on-line questionnaire, we were approached by Dr Bianca Ambrose-Oji of Forest Research, the Social and Economic Research Group tasked by the Environment Agency (EA) to look into the working relationship between the EA and voluntary workers and groups working with, or for, the Agency. She was especially keen to find out why, after some 5 years, the Group still functioned, why members had volunteered in the first place and what they each got from being a volunteer.

She visited Bodenham on 26 November and, after interviewing the Chairman and Secretary at some length, she attended the BFPG's monthly Meeting and took the opportunity to pose a series of questions about volunteering to the members present. Afterwards she was able to discuss volunteering with members individually and informally. She has subsequently completed her study and at the end of March sent us a copy of the draft 'glossy' summary. We are now awaiting the final version and a copy of her full report.

**High Visibility Jackets.** Shortly before Christmas the Environment Agency generously donated a number of high visibility vests to the Group and these were presented to us on 25 November by Mr Daniel Trewin, the Environment Agency's Team Leader of Flood Resilience for the West Midlands. Clearly marked "Flood Group", they will help to identify the Group's Area Representatives when they call at houses and, being highly reflective, will provide the Representatives with added protection by making them clearly visible in daylight and especially at night when emergencies often seem to occur.

**Flood Risk Management Workshop Birmingham (5 March 2014).** The Chairman and Secretary were invited to attend the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Management Workshop in Birmingham on 5 March. They joined some 40 delegates from universities, industry, local authorities, Defra, the Environment Agency and the National Flood Forum in a day spent helping to identify the main themes for the Agency's research programme into flood risk management over the next five years. We have recently received the initial report from the Workshop and have offered to help with the research projects which result from it in whatever ways we can.

### **Environment Agency Visit to Survey the Relief Channel.**

The Environment Agency's maps do not yet show the relief channel and other works completed as long ago as 2007-09 and would therefore appear to give an inaccurate picture of the flood risk to Bodenham Moor. It is important that any defences, or action taken to lessen the likelihood of the village flooding, are recorded as these could help with the reduction of insurance premiums.

The Environment Agency have agreed to visit Millcroft Farm in May and carry out a survey of the relief channel. It is to be hoped that this will then reflect the fact that, as shown in the recent bad weather this winter, the relief channel successfully spills any excess water coming down the Brook, or backing up from the River Lugg, onto the flood plain and away from the Village, thus very greatly reducing the local flood risk.

## **EXTERNAL PUBLICITY**

**Visit of Blast! Films.** On 24 May 2013 Mr Tom Wilde, an Assistant Producer of Blast! Films in London, visited Bodenham to see a working party session and to film material for a forthcoming Channel 4 documentary about the weather. He conducted a filmed interview with Mrs Dhonau about flood insurance matters, followed by ones with the Chairman and the Secretary about the flood risk

in Bodenham and the work of the BFPG. He then visited the working party and filmed members jetting drains and clearing the stretch of the Millcroft Brook upstream from the C1125. This gave him the opportunity to complete a final interview, this time with Mrs Rebecca Burnill.

**The Sunday Telegraph.** On 28 May 2013 Ms Jessica Winch, a personal finance reporter on The Telegraph, interviewed the Secretary at some length on the telephone about the flood risk in Bodenham and what the BFPG had done since 2007 to reduce this. She conducted another lengthy telephone interview on 30 May and arranged for a photographer to visit Bodenham the following day to take pictures of four members of the Group in action clearing the Millcroft Brook. Her article duly appeared in *The Sunday Telegraph* on 2 June, with the piece about the BFPG leading into a mention of the failure by the Government and the Association of British Insurers to come to an agreement on a replacement for 'The Statement of Principle'.

**ITN News.** The recent flooding in the South of England made flood risk insurance a current news issue and on 14 January this year we received a call from a researcher for ITN News on the subject. We helped her as much as we could with information about the experiences local residents have had in their dealings with flood insurance providers.

**The Hereford Times.** On 16 January 2014 *The Hereford Times* reported that a lady in her 70s, accompanied by her dog, had stalled her car in the flood water at the Millcroft Road/ Ketch Lane junction and had been there for two hours before being rescued. Fire crews from both Bromyard and Leominster, as well as an ambulance and 'first responders' from Bromyard equipped with specialist lines and floats, were deployed. The theme of the article was that the local community was callous and uncaring because, with one exception, people drove past her without stopping to see if they could help. There were several unconvincing aspects to this story which remain unresolved. However, given how much local residents do to mitigate the effects of flooding in and around the Village, to characterise them generally as being uncaring seems to be uncalled for and unfair, especially since no evidence was provided to show that any Bodenham resident was actually involved.

**BBC Radio 4 "You and Yours".** On 13 February the Chairman and Secretary were interviewed by the BBC for the Radio 4 "You and Yours" programme which went out the following day. A surprising number of people reported that they had heard the programme and we received a variety of responses. For example, a member of Lewes Town Council was interested in the work of the Group and wanted to seek our advice. There was also a request for guidance from two members of a group in the New Forest and on 27 February we discussed their problems with them over the telephone at some length.

**BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester.** On 24 February the Chairman received a telephone call from a reporter with BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester who was seeking views about the flood risk posed by the proposed Bovis Homes development of Shuker's Field. He recorded an interview over the telephone and the Chairman subsequently took part in a live interview on the 'Howard and Toni at Breakfast' programme the following morning.

**ITV Programme on Mary Dhonau.** On 11 March we were contacted by a researcher from ITV and the Chairman was interviewed over the telephone about Mrs Mary Dhonau in connection with a programme which ITV were thinking of making about her and her work.

## **SOCIAL EVENTS**

**Annual Barbecue.** At the kind invitation of Mr and Mrs Clark we held our Annual Barbecue at 'Rosewood' on the evening of 27 July. Unfortunately, the weather was unkind, but a little light rain was not going to deter BFPG members and, as always, it was a most enjoyable occasion.

**Annual Bonfire Party.** The annual Bonfire Party was held at Millcroft Farm on 21 September and some 30 members and their partners attended the conflagration and refreshments.



**Annual Quiz Night.** The annual Quiz Night was held on 25 October in the Parish Hall and was a great success. Some 54 members and their friends took part and generously contributed just over £416 in total for BFPG funds after deduction of expenses. Particular thanks must go to Mrs Anita Griffiths and Mrs Maureen Bick and their team for making all the arrangements and to Mrs Tricia Sanford for again acting as Quizmaster.

**Annual Coffee Morning.** The Group's annual Coffee Morning was held on 8 February 2014 in the Siward James Centre and was very well attended, raising £530 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.

## **SUMMARY**

Once again, this has been a very successful year for the Group and sincere thanks must go to the Environment Agency, to Herefordshire Council and Balfour Beatty, and to the River Lugg Internal Drainage Board for their support, as well as to Mr Hawnt and Hydro-Logic Limited for their continued and generous maintenance of the telemetry system. However, as always, particular thanks go to all those members 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.

**BODENHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP**  
**2013/14 Area Representatives and Committee List**

**Chairman/ Operations Manager: Cllr Tony Mitcheson**  
**Treasurer/ Secretary: Mrs Babs Mitcheson**

**The Moor:**

<b>The Moor Road:</b>	<b>Mr Tony Clark</b>
<b>Orchard Close/ Chapel Lane:</b>	<b>Mr Robert Pritchard</b>
<b>Brockington Road:</b>	<b>Mr Simon Dowler</b>
<b>(2 -31&amp; 35)</b>	
<b>Brockington Road:</b>	<b>Mrs Rebecca Burnill</b>
<b>(1, 32-34, 36 – 42A)</b>	
<b>Brockington Road (43- 54):</b>	<b>Mrs Gwen Bowden</b>
<b>Siward James:</b>	<b>Mrs Gillian Baines</b>
<b>Ash Grove Close:</b>	<b>Mrs Jean Fryer</b>
<b>Ash Grove View:</b>	<b>Mr David Harris</b>
<b>Ash Grove View:</b>	<b>Cllr Alec Avery</b>
<b>Millcroft Road:</b>	<b>Miss Barbara Gibson</b>

**Bodenham Village:**

<b>Bridge to War Memorial:</b>	<b>Mr Mike Mullenger</b>
<b>Church and Bodenham Village:</b>	<b>Mr David Ayshford Sanford</b>

**Maund Bryan:**

**Mr Philip Broomhead**

**BODENHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP REPORT**  
**(12 MAY 2014)**

1. **Summary of the Past Month.** There has been relatively little rain over the past month and so the Group has been able to make a good start to the annual working party 'season' with two sessions clearing sections of the Millcroft Brook and two short courses to train members to use the BFPG's pumps.
2. **Monthly Meeting.** Our fourth Meeting of the year on Tuesday, 29 April was attended by 28 members.
3. **Balfour Beatty.**
  - a. On 9 April Balfour Beatty delivered two pallets of filled sandbags to the Parish Hall. This is about one-third of the 500 sandbags we have requested to replace our stocks depleted over the past winter, but it is a start.
  - b. On 14 April Cllr Jeremy Millar kindly arranged for the Chairman and Secretary to meet Mr Philip Pankhurst, the newly appointed Balfour Beatty Locality Steward who is currently responsible for the Hampton Court Ward amongst others. Although Mr Pankhurst's permanent area will be Weobley, he will be looking after Bodenham until our own permanent Locality Steward is appointed; this could be in a few weeks or may not be for several months. The Chairman had the opportunity to describe the BFPG to him, offer him the Group's help and brief him on the Ketch Lane culverts issue. In return Mr Pankhurst had an immediate gift for the Group in the form of the 200 empty sandbags we had requested last Autumn and these will now allow us to repair damaged sandbags when we carry out our annual checks this summer.
4. **External Contacts.**
  - a. **Herefordshire Council.** We continue to await a response about the Ketch Lane and Pugh's Field culverts and about our offer to help Herefordshire Council and Balfour Beatty with monitoring and signing road closures when the Ketch Lane junction is flooded.
  - b. **Defra.** We have heard from Mrs Dhonau that, partly as a result of what the BFPG has achieved, Defra has funded 13 pathfinder projects to encourage other communities to emulate the Group's work. Mrs Dhonau is now working on one of these projects in Northampton and the Secretary has provided her with a list of the equipment that the Group use as an example of what may be needed.
  - c. **Environment Agency Visit to Survey the Relief Channel.** As reported at the last Meeting, the Environment Agency have agreed to carry out a survey of the relief channel. It is hoped that this will be conducted on 22 May and that its results will reflect the fact that, as shown in the recent bad weather this winter, the relief channel spills any excess water coming down the Brook, or backing up from the River Lugg, onto the flood plain and away from the Village. This, in turn, may result in updated Environment Agency maps which may more accurately indicate the flood risk to the local area.
  - d. **Convergent Volunteers Project.** On 28 April we were contacted by Mr Christopher Smith, a Research Assistant at Warwick University's Business School, who is engaged in a DEFRA-funded project looking at the involvement of volunteers in flood response. On 9 May he conducted a 1¼ hour long telephone interview with the Chairman and Secretary seeking their views on how best use can be made of 'convergent volunteers',

*i.e.* those volunteers who turn up without prior warning to offer their help during a flooding emergency.

5. **Working Parties.**

a. The first working party session of the year took place on Friday, 11 April and was attended by 14 members. They cleared the brook of debris and silt from Brockington Road Bridge up to the C1125 and the exit of Flap Valve No 4 just downstream of Brockington Road Bridge. Meanwhile, those with waders walked the length of the brook from Brockington Road Bridge to Millcroft Farm and noted the action to be taken on clearing flap valves and dealing with bank erosion and blockages during future working party sessions.

b. On 25 April, despite the poor weather, 7 members of the Group made a lot of progress clearing the build up of silt and vegetation on the Millcroft Brook opposite Millcroft Farm. It will take a few more sessions to clear all the silt that has accumulated over the winter, including that inside, and immediately downstream of, the East Ketch Lane Culvert. This is work which, if it can be done now, will not take a lot of effort, but, if left, could create much bigger problems in the future.

c. On Friday, 9 May 15 members cleared the bank of silt downstream of the East Ketch Lane culvert and as much of the silt inside the culvert itself as they could. (The water level was too high to complete the latter task properly and we will have to return to it at a later date). Members then moved upstream and continued the work of clearing vegetation from the stream bed alongside the Millcroft Farm orchard.

6. **Pump Training.** Two very successful Pump Training Sessions were held at Millcroft Farm on Saturday, 12 April, when 8 members attended, and on Saturday, 19 April, when 9 were present.

7. **Social Events.** The next event on the Group's social calendar is the Annual Barbecue which is being held on Saturday, 28 June at Willow Cottage, Maund Bryan by kind invitation of Mr and Mrs Schwartz.

K.A.M.