

Bodenham Parish Council
Chairman's Report - 2009/2010
Welcome!

It is always good to see that the character and appearance of Bodenham is being enhanced by such projects as the most attractive refurbishment of the coach house at the fine 16th century listed Englands' Gate Inn. The coach house now has seven en-suite rooms and the whole appearance of this village gateway establishment has been transformed and brought much favourable comment. A real credit to the vision of the owner. In similar vein it's also noted that work is still in progress on the refurbishment of another fine listed building, Bodenham Hall which, together with the now completed barn conversions at Bodenham Court, will further preserve our historic heritage in this sensitive Conservation Area.

All Parish Councillors are committed to taking measures that contribute to improving the quality of life of the community and have spent considerable time and energy on such relatively mundane matters as speeding, dog-fouling, bonfires, littering of our roadside verges, flooding, etc, etc. It is frustrating that we do not always achieve what we set out to do. However, we are indeed fortunate that we have the support of public-spirited villagers who quietly go about improving their local environment. The unsung people that, for example, clear up around the bus shelter and iconic telephone kiosk near England's Gate are my heroes.

We hear many legitimate complaints about such things as potholes brought about by the severe winter weather etc. but on the positive side let's remember we really do have a real gem of a sustainable village community with a thriving school, an excellent doctors' surgery, a beautiful church, a chapel, a parish hall (now with a splendid re-surfaced car park!) and all the local services that so many villages lack. The Parish Council always looks to the future and has embarked on the task of creating a Parish website that will promote all the various village organisations and assist local residents and visitors alike in the provision of vital information. Plans to produce a Community-Led Plan (formerly known as a Parish Plan) are also advancing. It is hoped that the Plan will encompass the hopes and aspirations of the whole community and guide the Parish Council on its future areas of activity. I pay tribute to those who have spent many hours in taking these projects forward. There is also a lot of unheralded work done for example to ensure potential income from the Newsletter is collected which helps pay for it.

In response to Herefordshire Council's consultation on future development in the village up to 2026, the Parish Council took the view that there should be little, if any, new housing, which if permitted would have led to pressure on the capacity of the doctors' surgery or school to cope. In a subsequent paper it has been confirmed that the Parish Council's views are likely to prevail in this matter although a small number of affordable housing units may be erected on an, as yet unidentified, site to meet local needs.

During the year the Parish Council made strong representations on the importance of retaining a satisfactory bus service in the village to support those vulnerable residents who rely on them for shopping, hospital visits etc. We were gratified to learn that our

pleas had been listened to and existing levels of service maintained. Following an initiative to have The Green along The Moor registered as a Common we have learned recently that it is already protected from built development by virtue of its status as a public Open Space under a 1906 Act! This means it continues to be available for recreational use by villagers in perpetuity. Still on the subject of registration, steps are in hand to have the Parish Council's legal title to the ownership of the site of the Parish Hall, and the Parish car park (opposite St Michael's Primary School) confirmed by seeking registration with HM Land Registry.

Our local policing team - PC Jill Richardson and Community Support Officer Stephanie Annette - continue to liaise closely with the Parish Council on a range of concerns and support, wherever possible, the steps we take to limit speeding throughout the village. We appreciate their attendance at Parish Council meetings and welcomed the two village "walkabout" events during the year. The West Mercia Police community fund awarded grants of £150 to the Community Access Point, which meets at the Siward James Centre and £220 to the Bodenham Flood Protection Group. The BFPG held two very successful fund raising events and is now largely self-financing. Still on the subject of flood prevention it is hoped that a long standing flood related issue in Orchard Close has been resolved following pressure from Cllr Grumbley and action taken by Herefordshire Council's drainage engineers. The results of a detailed Flood Risk study being undertaken by a Consultant Hydrologist engaged by Herefordshire Council are awaited. It is hoped that this will lead other long-standing areas of concern being addressed.

The Parish Council continues to give careful consideration to planning applications and has sent some 23 detailed responses to Herefordshire Council consultation during the year. We always try to reflect the concerns of those who may be affected. Two important planning appeals have been determined during the year - the Planning Inspector upheld Mr Jones' contention that the temporary consent for his Chapel Lane residential caravan site was unreasonable and ruled that the time limit on consent should be removed. In the other case the Inspector dismissed the appeal against refusal of consent for a residential unit for the Brockington Golf Club groundsman.

The Parish Council continues to be represented on the Queenswood and Bodenham Lake Advisory Panel (Cllr. Pam James Moore) and the Parish Hall Management Committee (Cllr. Keith Grumbley). Cllrs. Robin Knott and Derek Ling also sit on the PHMC.

We are indebted to Paul Hemmings (Internal Auditor), Sue Newbould (Parish Footpaths Officer) and Susan Hayworth (Editor, Bodenham Newsletter) for all they do on behalf of parishioners. I'd also like to add my thanks to all those members of the community who have contacted the Parish Council with their concerns and those hardy souls that attend Parish Council meetings. Last but not least I wish to express my appreciation of the support received from my fellow Parish Councillors and the Clerk over the year.

David J Tilford
7th Mav2010