

## Chairman's Report 2012/2013

Rather unexpectedly I find myself in the position of having to make the Chairman's report. It has been a rather turbulent year for the Council, having sadly lost the previous chairman last year. Derek Ling was an excellent chair and will be sorely missed on the Council. He helped to promote a whole range of initiatives, not least the "Parish Plan" which was finally published in this council year. The Council adopted the plan as a guide to the future development of the village and gave responsibility for the various activities to councillors, who with the assistance of willing volunteers, hope to promote the aims suggested in the plan. Subsequently the Council has launched the plan with a very successful presentation on Road Safety and Crime Prevention. The plan will influence the subsequent production of a "Neighbourhood Development Plan". The preliminary work is being undertaken by a sub-committee including Councillors Avery and Mitcheson with the help of Mr David Tilford; many thanks.

The Council has at last managed to co-opt the required number to operate on a full complement of councillors. I must thank my colleagues for all their hard work over the year and to the Parish Clerk without whose tremendous efforts the Council would flounder. We have produced and adopted several new pieces of helpful guidance over the year. We now have a new "Code of Conduct for Councillors", new "Standing Orders" and a "Freedom of Information Publication Scheme". I am grateful to everyone for their efforts in putting these ideas together but I would like to thank Councillors Mitcheson and Powell, in particular, for their help in formulating these proposals.

Over the year, a grant was made to assist the acquisition of modern internet and lecturing facilities at the Parish Hall (aided by a Community Technology Grant). I am indebted to Councillors Knott and Jackson and the rest of the Parish Hall Management Committee for their continued hard work in maintaining such a high quality asset in the village. I would also like to thank Councillor Knott, personally, for standing in for me at meetings where I have been absent.

We have adopted the red telephone kiosk and look forward to its future development. The village celebrated the Queens Jubilee last year and the Council helped with a grant towards the costs. We have similarly supported the first and very successful Bodenham Festival just last week.

The Flood Committee continues with its excellent work, we are most grateful to all those who willingly give of their time in this and other areas for the benefit of us all. We now have the benefit of telemetric warnings when the Millcroft stream rises. We are very grateful for the kindness shown by a local company in the gift of this equipment and its maintenance. The early warning system has been shown to operate very successfully but fortunately without any associated flooding.

The Village Web Site goes from strength to strength ably administered by Councillor Tony Mitcheson. The continued efforts of Susan Haworth have maintained the very high standards of the Newsletter, for which many thanks. We are indebted to Paul Hemmings as Internal Auditor and to Sue Hack who has acted as a very able Footpaths Officer for many years. Sadly, Sue has decided to resign so we are looking for a replacement volunteer.

Our meetings are made more useful by the presence of Councillor Jeremy Millar, who offers advice on Herefordshire Council's views on matters under discussion and has carried the Parish Council's thoughts through to Hereford. We are most grateful to the Community Support Officer, Stephanie

Annette, who is also a most useful addition to our deliberations with her reports on local crime and the Rural Watch Scheme, many thanks. The operation of our SID continues to discourage the speeding problems that so plague the village. Thanks are due to Councillors Mitcheson and Pollard for the maintenance of this service. How people can live with the knowledge that they have driven at over 70 m.p.h. along our roads is beyond my comprehension. May the smiley face be seen much more often.

We continue to advise Herefordshire Council on planning matters and to forward the problems that have arisen by footpath closures and redirections over the year. My thanks are due to Councillors James-Moore and Pollard for their work on the planning subcommittee. The problems associated with road maintenance occupy much of our time and are made worse by the financial constraints imposed on Herefordshire Council and their main contractor, Amey. Councillor James-Moore continues to act on our behalf with the Queenswood Committee, many thanks.

Perhaps one of the best initiatives taken by the Council this year has been the adoption of the Lengthsman scheme, which has seen a significant improvement to the housekeeping needs of the village. Many thanks to the subcommittee that works out what needs to be done and to the Parish Clerk for organising it. I am pleased to say that the funding will continue to be received from Herefordshire Council for the next year.

I would like to thank all the willing volunteers whose work continues to enhance village life and particularly to my colleagues who give so freely of their time, good will and wisdom to help the village to prosper.

R W Clarke

Chairman Bodenham Parish Council

13<sup>th</sup> May 2013