

BODENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE SIWARD JAMES CENTRE
at 7.30 pm on Monday, 1st December 2014**

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

10 members of the public were present at the start of the Meeting.

1. Introduction: Presentation by EcoNRGSolutions Ltd.

1.1 John Antoniou, Jimmy Offley and Axel Puttkammer of EcoNRGSolutions Ltd. gave a presentation on a proposed development of a 5Mw solar farm on land on the boundary between Bodenham and Marden owned by Mr M. Pugh and Mr P. Badham. Mr Antoniou said that the site would cover 20-25 acres.

1.2 Cllr Powell asked what visual impact the development would have. Mr Antoniou explained that it would have no visual impact on Bodenham, because of its location, and that the solar panels would be 2.5m high and mounted 0.8m off the ground, so that sheep could graze around them.

1.3 Cllr Mitcheson asked about the angle of the panels. Mr Puttkammer said that a low angle works best on cloudy days and is less visually intrusive.

1.4 Cllr Mitcheson went on to ask whether a location in the south of England would not be more suitable. Mr Antoniou said that the location of solar farms is largely determined by the capacity of the local electricity grid to accept the electricity generated by them.

1.5 Cllr Mitcheson then asked whether the Parish would benefit in any way. Mr Antoniou said that the company's policy was that a parish should benefit in some way and he suggested that, for example, installing solar panels on the Parish Hall might be a suitable way of benefitting the Parish.

1.6 Cllr Mitcheson also asked what impact the construction and maintenance of the solar farm would have, for instance on local roads. Mr Antoniou said that Ms Debbie Klein (Herefordshire Council Planning Department) had been consulted and would have to approve the construction, which would take 5-6 weeks. He added that solar farms are virtually maintenance-free.

1.7 Cllr Powell asked how electricity would be fed into the grid from the solar farm. Mr Antoniou said that it was envisaged that an underground cable would connect the solar farm to the sub-station on Dunfield Lane.

1.8 Cllr Avery asked about the choice of solar panels rather than wind turbines. Mr Antoniou said that turbines have a more adverse visual impact, require more maintenance and therefore expenditure, and are less popular with local residents. Cllr Avery also asked about screening of the site. Mr Antoniou said that the proposed site was too elevated to be screened from the C1125, but the rest of the site would be screened by hedges, as determined by the planning officers, and the hedges would be maintained by the landowners.

1.9 Cllr Mitcheson asked about the next stages in the process. Mr Antoniou said that he and his colleagues hoped to attend the next meeting of Marden Parish Council on 12th January and would submit a pre-application thereafter, but the subsequent timescale was unknown at the moment. Cllr Mitcheson thanked the visitors for their presentation and they then departed.

2. Apologies for Absence. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Bob Clarke and Cllr Jeremy Millar.

3. Declarations of Interest. Cllr Knott declared an interest in Items 10 and 11 on the Agenda. Cllrs Mitcheson and Powell declared an interest in Item 12 on the Agenda.

4. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting.** The Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd November were accepted as a correct record (Proposer; Cllr Powell; Seconder; Cllr James-Moore).

5. **Matters Arising from the Minutes.**

5.1 **Minute 4.1: Communications.** Cllr Mitcheson said the Website had been down for several days recently, but was now working again. The fault had been with the external servers hosting the Website and Mr Richard Horlock had been very supportive in getting the problem fixed.

5.2 **Minute 4.3: Community Asset Transfer.** Cllr Mitcheson reported that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had not, as yet, met to consider the matter.

ACTION: NPSG

5.3 **Minute 4.4: Patient Consultative Group.** The Clerk reported that the information he had obtained from the Surgery did not fully correspond to the information from Cllr Clarke on which the request for a Parish Council representative had been based. The Clerk said that he would speak to Cllr Clarke about the matter.

ACTION: CS

5.4 **Minute 4.5: Road Safety.** The Clerk reported that he had heard from Mrs Justine Heath that the data collected in May had been sent to the Traffic Management Support Officer at Herefordshire Council. The Clerk was instructed to pursue the matter with Mrs Heath. Cllr Austin asked about the suggestion that a Community Speed Watch should be organised. The Clerk confirmed that he had placed an item about the scheme in the December/ January *Newsletter*. So far only two volunteers had come forward, but six were needed for the Parish to adopt the scheme.

ACTION: CS

5.5 **Minute 4.6: Telephone Box.** The Clerk reported that the Lengthsman would maintain the telephone box as part of his duties. Cllr Powell said that she had spoken to Mr Jonathan Sant, while he was working on the telephone box, and that his view was that the telephone box should function as a library, rather than as a book exchange. Cllr Mitcheson asked how this would work. Cllr Powell said that she assumed that users would sign books out and in themselves.

5.6 **Minute 5.3: Trees on the Village Green.** Cllr Mitcheson outlined the quote which the Clerk had obtained from Adrian Hope Tree Services. Cllr Powell suggested that, for the amount of expenditure required, other quotes ought to be obtained. The Clerk was instructed to arrange for this.

ACTION: CS

5.7 **Minute 8.1: The 426 Bus Service.** The Clerk reported that he had contacted Mr Phillip Brown, the Clerk for Humber, Risbury and Stoke Prior Parish Council, who was of the opinion that a regular taxi service to Leominster, as had been suggested, was impractical owing to the small likely demand.

5.8 **The Winter Maintenance Self Help Scheme.** The Clerk confirmed that the Lengthsman had covered the supply of salt at the Parish Hall with the BFGP's tarpaulin.

5.9 **Minutes 12.3.3 and 14.3: Quotations for Paths and for Drainage of the Playground.** The Clerk reported that he had obtained quotes from the Lengthsman for installing paths at the Chapel Lane bus shelter and the telephone box and for improving the drainage of the playground. Cllr James-Moore suggested that installing a path to the telephone box should be deferred until the outcome of the planning application for the land opposite England's Gate was known. This was agreed. Cllr Powell suggested that the drainage of the playground should also be deferred for the same reason, because the playground might benefit from a Section 106 agreement as part of the planning application. This was also agreed. The Clerk was instructed to obtain another quote for the path to the Chapel Lane bus shelter and to ask Balfour Beatty for an update on the likely timescale for action on the request already with them for them to install this path.

ACTION: CS

6. **Opportunity for Members of the Public to Address the Parish Council.**

6.1 Mrs Liz Davies asked whether anything could be done about the poor state of the road markings in Bodenham, in particular the 'SLOW' signs on the approach to Bodenham bridge and the stop signs at the C1121 end of Ketch Lane. The Clerk was instructed to contact Balfour Beatty about this.

ACTION: CS

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

7.1 **Communications.** Already covered at Minute 5.1 above.

7.2 **Health.** Cllr Powell reported that progress towards obtaining defibrillators had been made by holding a coffee morning which had raised over £500 towards the total of £1,470 (plus installation), which is needed. She said that the Bodenham Community Charity would be approached and that using the Gift Aid scheme might be possible, as might be an application to the Herefordshire Fund For Defibrillators in Schools. She added that she would negotiate with the Surgery as to the exact location of a defibrillator there, given the need for an electricity supply to it. The other option for Bodenham Moor was Brockington Golf Club, who were prepared to move their defibrillator outside. However, they would not pay for this to be done and the defibrillator would not be as centrally located as one at the Surgery. Cllr Knott asked about the timescale for installation of the defibrillators. Cllr Powell replied that the British Heart Foundation had not set a time limit for installation and that the cabinets for the defibrillators could be bought and installed now.

7.3 **Road Safety.** Already covered at Minute 5.5 above. (See also Minute 12.1 below).

8. **Footpath Officer.**

8.1 The Clerk reported that Mrs Mandy Cole had expressed an interest in taking up the role of Parish Footpath Officer. The Clerk was instructed to arrange for Mrs Cole to be registered with Herefordshire Council. **ACTION: CS**

9. **Trees on the Village Green.**

9.1 This matter was covered in Minute 5.7 above. Cllr Mitcheson added that he was concerned that leaving the wood from the felled trees on the Green on the assumption that it might all be taken away by residents might not be sensible. He suggested that it might be worth considering whether the wood could be sold. The Clerk agreed to pursue this.

ACTION: CS

10. **Parish Hall Grant Application.**

10.1 Cllr Knott circulated the accounts of the Parish Hall for 2013-14, which showed a deficit of £17,000 as a result of the expenditure on the new kitchen. He reported that income from room hire fees had increased by £1,500.

10.2 He also circulated a document - attached as Annex A - outlining the reasons for requesting a grant for the Parish Hall. Cllr Avery proposed and Cllr James-Moore seconded that the grant be approved, which it was unanimously.

11. **Parish Hall Public Works Loan Board Application.**

11.1 Cllr Knott reported that the Parish Hall Management Committee intended to apply to the Public Works Loan Board for a loan, probably in the region of £20,000, and requested that the Parish Council should support this initiative. Cllr Mitcheson asked whether the Parish Hall could afford the repayments on the loan out of its own finances. Cllr Knott replied affirmatively. Cllr Jackson proposed and Cllr Powell seconded that the Parish Council should support a loan application. The motion was carried unanimously.

12. **Setting the Precept.**

12.1 Cllr Mitcheson presented a draft income and expenditure spreadsheet for 2015-16 as an aid to the setting of the Precept. In discussion, changes were made to the projected figures, including the addition of provisional expenditure for an election and the removal of the Cc Recharge item shown. Cllr Mitcheson stressed that in the Precept for the current year money had been included for road safety measures since these had been accorded a high priority in the Parish Plan. The proposed Precept carried this funding forward and added to it. It was essential, therefore, that in the coming year the Council took action to achieve real progress in getting such measures in place. At Cllr Avery's suggestion the members of the public who were present were asked if they had any views. Mrs Babs Mitcheson requested that 'gates' be installed at either end of the 40 mph stretch of the A417 as a traffic-calming measure. It was not known how much these would cost, but a rough estimate might be £5,000. After further discussion, Cllr Knott proposed and Cllr James-Moore seconded that the Precept for 2015-16 be set at £11,500. The motion was accepted unanimously and the Clerk was instructed to make the request to Herefordshire Council. The revised spreadsheet is attached as Annex B.

ACTION: CS

13. **Finance.**

13.1 **Monthly Accounts.** The Clerk reported that the accounts had been circulated as a spreadsheet. Cllr Mitcheson said that this had been amended to reflect the fact that the top line opening balance figures should not be counted as income in each individual month, except the first, *i.e.* the amount carried forward from the previous year in April. The revised spreadsheet was displayed, the accounts were then approved (Proposer; Cllr Knott: Seconder; Cllr Austin), and are attached as Annex C.

13.2 **Invoices.** Cllr Pollard proposed and Cllr Jackson seconded that the following invoices be paid:

- DC Gardening Services (Lengthsman's October invoice)	£107.80
- Mr A Clark (BFPG equipment)	£64.65
- Clerk's expenses (cartridges)	£37.00
- Bodenham Parish Hall (NPlan and BFPG room hire)	£47.50
- Leominster Community Resource Centre (November Newsletter)	£185.00

14. **Planning.**

14.1 The Clerk reported that no planning applications had been received since the last Parish Council meeting.

15. **Updates.**

15.1 **Bodenham Flood Protection Group.** Cllr Mitcheson gave a report, which is attached as Annex D.

15.2 **Parish Hall.** See Minutes 10 and 11 above.

15.3 **Lengthsman.** The Clerk reported that the Lengthsman had completed grass cutting for the year. See also Minute 5.10.

15.4 **Neighbourhood Plan.** Cllr Mitcheson reported that the basic analysis of the responses to the questionnaire had been completed by the external contractor and that the overall return rate had been 54%. He added that a commentary on the analysis was being prepared to help define the key conclusions and recommendations to be drawn from the survey. With Christmas approaching, this would not be completed until well into January, but it would then allow the Steering Group to hold another public meeting to publicise and discuss the results.

16. **Correspondence Not Previously Circulated.**

16.1 The Clerk reported that no correspondence had been received which had not previously been circulated.

17. **Other Business.**

17.1 **Solar Farm.** Following the EcoNRGSolutions Ltd presentation (Minute 1 above), Cllr Austin asked what the Councillors' views on the proposed solar farm were, adding that he supported it. Cllr Avery said that he opposed the proposal. Cllr Mitcheson noted that the solar farm would not be visible from Bodenham Moor. Cllr James-Moore suggested that there should be a site visit prior to a planning application being received.

18. **Dates of Next Meetings.**

18.1 The next three Meetings will be held on 5th January, 2nd February and 2nd March.

18.2 There being no other business, the Meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Bodenham Parish Hall

Request for renewal of grant towards the upkeep of Bodenham Parish Hall

For many years Bodenham Parish Council have made a grant towards the general upkeep and fuel /power costs of the Parish Hall. Over the years this has risen to a current figure of £1200 per year.

In my request to you last year I went to great lengths to explain the work and plans of the management committee. This work and commitment continues unfettered. Again our financial management has been excellent and due to the hard work of a number of supporters we have shown a satisfactory profit for the year. Our accounts again are slightly swayed as they include payment for the kitchen etc with the grant being shown in the previous year.

The new boiler will have been fitted and following a few recent problems with the system all appears to be working well.

As with any charity of this type it is our aim and intention to keep at least our annual running costs in reserve. (In case of a rainy day or an unplanned major expenditure)

Whilst a lot of work has been carried out of late we must not rest on our laurels; a building of this type is in need of constant maintenance and improvements if we wish to maintain our current use.

Our plans for the next 12months are as follows :-

- Repainting of corridor area following improvements made recently to the lighting system
- Resurface and varnish of Main Hall floor (planned during Christmas period by committee members)
- Replacement of Doors and windows to north of hall
- Refurbishment of all toilets

We are currently awaiting final quotes for this work but it is expected to be around £25000.

With that I mind we are not only asking for a continuation of our grant but that the parish council also support us by applying for a PWLB loan on our behalf. The final loan amount is not yet decided but I would expect this to be in the region of £20000. I would expect the PHMC to meet all payments in full.

I hope the parish council are able to look at this request in a positive manner.

Robin G Knott
Chairman Parish Hall Management Committee

Precept: Projected Income and Expenditure 2015-16

Ser	INCOME/ EXPENSES	2014/15 PRECEPT	2014-15 ACTUAL (Estimated)	DRAFT 2015- 16 PRECEPT	REMARKS
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
	Expenses				
1.	Clerk Salary	£1,859.00	£1,765.48	£1,455.48	£121.29 x 12 months
2.	Clerk Expenses	£400.00	£270.92	£400.00	
3.	HMRC		£363.84	£360.00	£30.32 x 12 months
4.	Newsletter	£2,400.00	£2,319.64	£2,500.00	
5.	Room Hire	£252.00	£346.75	£400.00	
6.	Parish Hall	£1,200.00	£1,200.00	£1,200.00	Application for grant agreed
7.	British Legion	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	
8.	Wreath	£15.00		£15.00	
9.	Lengthsman	£3,000.00	£3,858.60	£4,500.00	P3 Scheme?
10.	Lengthsman (Additional)	£1,500.00		£3,000.00	Bus shelter/ Telephone Kiosk Paths?
11.	Insurance	£550.00	£503.98	£510.00	
12.	Audit	£170.00	£150.00	£150.00	
13.	Church	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	
14.	Village Grass Cutting	£650.00			Now done by the Lengthsman
15.	Play Area	£800.00	£800.00	£2,000.00	Play Area Drainage?
16.	Play Area Inspection		£40.60	£45.00	
17.	Car Park Loan	£1,478.00	£1,499.66	£1,500.00	
18.	Website	£200.00	£200.00	£200.00	
19.	Telemetry System			£36.00	
20.	Elections	£0.00	£0.00	£1,260.00	
21.	Cc Recharge	£500.00	£500.00		
22.	Neighbourhood Plan	£3,500.00		£5,000.00	
23.	Speeding Initiatives	£5,000.00	£148.90	£5,000.00	Additional funding for chicane(s)? England's Gate path? A417 SIDs? A417 'Gates'?
24.	Contingency/ Miscellaneous	£3,200.00	£930.16	£4,490.05	Tree felling on Green? Defibrillators? Flood Protection Improvements?
25.	Total	£27,724.00	£15,948.53	£35,071.53	
	Income				
26.	Advertising	£2,200.00	£2,682.50	£2,800.00	

Ser	INCOME/ EXPENSES	2014/15 PRECEPT	2014-15 ACTUAL (Estimated)	DRAFT 2015- 16 PRECEPT	REMARKS
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
27.	VAT Refund		£103.53	£100.00	
28.	Parish Hall Loan	£739.00	£749.83	£750.00	
29.	Lengthsman	£3,000.00	£3,113.00	£2,512.00	Matched funding?
30.	Total	£5,939.00	£6,648.86	£6,162.00	
	Precept Calculation				
31.	Proposed Expenditure	£27,724.00	£15,948.53	£35,071.53	
32.	Proposed Income (Excluding Precept)	£5,939.00	£6,648.86	£6,162.00	
33.	Funds Remaining at End of Year	£7,600.00	£17,409.53	£17,409.53	Estimated with 4 months' income and expenditure not yet known.
34.	PRECEPT REQUIRED	£14,185.00	£8,109.86	£11,500.00	

Monthly Accounts: November 2014

Bodenham Parish Council 2014/15

	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
PC Opening Balance	12514.2	19412	18415	16912	16499.8	16903.4	22580.1	22661.1	21123.5	19687	17967.7	17408
Income												
Newsletter	209.5	325.00	165.00	125.00	170.00	380.00	370.00		238	0	230	470
VAT Refund			103.53									
Car Park Loan			374.92						374.91			
Lengthsm an	778				778.25		778.25			778.25		
Neighbour hood Plan												
Precept	7097.50					7097.50						
TOTAL	8085.25	325.00	643.45	125.00	948.25	7477.50	1148.25	0.00	612.91	778.25	230.00	470.00
Expenditu re												
Miscellane ous		28.00	488.16	180.00			120.00					
Car Park Loan			749.83						749.83			
Church Grant								1000				
Clerk Salary	431.29	121.29	121.29	121.29	121.29	121.29	121.29	121.29	121.29	121.29	121.29	121.29
Clerk Expenses		16.92	6.36	19.00	25.50	33.36	27.36		52.00	26.47	27.95	36.00
HMRC	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		503.98										
Website									200			

	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Newsletter		336.50	185.00	186.60	159.85	250.00	353.25		381.19	191.25	250	26.00
Playground repairs							200.00		400			200
Room Hire		15.00			67.50	65.25		81.00		63		55
Lengthsman	463.4	270.00	565.00		140.20	1110.00	215.00	255.00	115	365	360	
Playground Inspection						40.60						
Audit						150.00						
Parish Hall Grant										1200		
Parish Plan	114											
Telemetry System												
Speeding initiatives	148.9											
C C Recharge										500		
British Legion Grant								50				
TOTAL PC Expenditure	1187.91	1322	2146	537.21	544.66	1800.82	1067.22	1537.61	2049.63	2497.3	789.56	468.61
PC Closing Balance	19411.54	18414.53	16912.02	16499.81	16903.40	22580.08	22661.11	21123.50	19686.78	17967.70	17408.14	17409.53
BFPG Open Balance	2815.07	2815.07	2827.07	2734.37	2743.81	2650.29	2623.47	2623.47	2950.22	2950.22	2950.22	2950.22
BFPG Inc		30.00		30.00				365				
BFPG Ex		18.00	92.70	20.56	93.52	26.82		38				
BFPG Closing Balance	2815.07	2827.1	2734.4	2743.8	2650.29	2623.47	2623.47	2950.22	2950.22	2950.2	2950.22	2950.2
N Plan Open Balance	3982	3982	3630.3	3618.4	3565.92	2919.52	3819.52	3028.52	2823.52	923.52	0	0.00

BODENHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP REPORT
(1 DECEMBER 2014)

1. **Summary of the Past Month.** The rain over the last month has obviously left the ground saturated and this has led to the early warning telemetry system sending us the first alert for this 'season'. This occurred at 4.35a.m. on Wednesday, 26 November when the water level in the Millcroft Brook very briefly rose to just over 0.5m. For the rest of the month, however, the Brook has remained very low.
2. **Monthly Meeting.** Our monthly Meeting on Tuesday, 25 November was attended by 32 members and, since there is no BFPG Meeting in December, was followed by some end of year/ pre-Christmas refreshments.
3. **Sandbags.** We are still awaiting delivery of the 150 sandbags which we requested to provide a central reserve at the Parish Hall and would ask the Parish Clerk to send Balfour Beatty a reminder.
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 Project - Surveying for Flood Resilience in Individual Properties.**
 - (1) As previously reported, the Secretary has been invited to join the Board of the DEFRA Project "Surveying for Flood Resilience in Individual Properties". The Project's aim is to encourage wider use of property level flood protection (PLP) "by developing a cohort of competent surveyors". The research is concentrating on the training and assessment of surveyors who will provide the initial risk assessment of properties - so called 'independent flood risk advisors (iFRA)' - rather than those who will look at the actual installation of flood protection equipment in houses. (The latter is obviously important as well, but is being looked at separately).
 - (2) The Secretary duly attended the Project's first Board Meeting in London on 29 October as a 'consumer' representative. This was followed up by e-mail correspondence to which she has also contributed and she will be attending a second Board Meeting early in the New Year.
 - c. **Northamptonshire Flood Resilience Community Pathfinder Project.**
 - (1) As previously reported, Northamptonshire are one of 13 local authorities across the country taking part in the £5M Defra scheme to encourage local communities to come up with innovative ways to reduce the flood risk to their localities. Northamptonshire has funding of £384,030 for their project, of which some £299,150 is coming from Defra.
 - (2) The County now has 15 parishes involved and held a Training Day for these Pathfinder Groups on Saturday, 15 November. A total of 26 volunteer flood wardens

drawn from across these communities attended and the Chairman and Secretary were invited to talk about the work of the BFPG under the heading “*Real Life Flood Events and Lessons Learned*”. Mrs Mary Dhonau, who was leading the seminar, introduced this presentation by saying that the whole countrywide Pathfinder Scheme was based on the example set by the BFPG.

(3) The Training Day proved to be very well organised and interesting. There was a great deal to be learnt from the other presentations and, in particular, from that by the member of Northamptonshire County Council leading the Council’s work on flood protection and resilience. Her work on developing the Council’s flood protection website was especially impressive and she said that she would be very willing to share her Council’s ideas and experience with the relevant members of Herefordshire Council. Such an exchange should certainly be encouraged

5. **Annual Quiz Night**. The annual Quiz Night was held on Friday, 14 November in the Parish Hall. In a very enjoyable and successful evening some £335 was raised for the Group’s funds after the deduction of expenses and, despite the absence of the BFPG Chairman and Secretary in Northamptonshire, the Parish Council team were declared the winners.

6. **Annual Coffee Morning**. The next event on the BFPG’s social calendar is the Annual Coffee Morning. This will be held from 10.00am to 12.00 noon on Saturday, 14 February 2015 in the Siward James Centre. As always, Councillors will be most welcome to attend.

K.A.M.