

**BODENHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD AT THE SIWARD JAMES CENTRE  
at 7.30 pm on Monday, 13th April 2015**

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

Cllr Jeremy Millar (District Councillor) was also present.

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

Mr David Baume of Hook Mason Architects attended the meeting for Item 1.

**1. Introduction.**

- 1.1 Mr David Baume of Hook Mason Architects gave a presentation on a proposal to develop the field adjacent to England's Gate Inn. He said that an outline planning proposal was in preparation for up to ten 2-3 bedroom houses, none of which would be classed as affordable housing, because developments of 10 houses or fewer fall outside current affordable housing and Section 106 legislation. He noted that Herefordshire Council had recommended that access to the site should be through the car park at England's Gate Inn, rather than on to Millcroft Road, and added that a public exhibition about the proposed development would be held in Bodenham Parish Hall in the near future. He indicated that the owner of the site intended to sell the land to an as yet unknown developer.
- 1.2 Cllrs Clarke and Mitcheson said that in their view the choice of access route was an extremely poor one because the adjacent junction of the C1125 and A417 was already narrow and dangerous, a situation which was already destined to be made worse if the proposed development of the field opposite England's Gate Inn took place. Mr Baume repeated that Herefordshire Council Planning Office's preference was for access *via* the car park.
- 1.3 Mr Baume was asked whether he could provide any details about the design of the houses which would be built on the site, but he said that this was a 'reserved' matter to be decided later. Cllr Powell asked whether examples of Hook Mason's previous developments were available on their website. Mr Baume seemed unsure about this.
- 1.4 Cllr Mitcheson questioned whether there would be any point in holding a public exhibition until these and other details of the proposed development were available.
- 1.5 Cllr Millar asked about the effect of the development on the already overloaded sewerage system in Bodenham Moor. Mr Baume said that Welsh Water had been approached on the matter of sewerage, but had not yet replied. Cllr Millar pointed out that, if all the currently proposed developments in Bodenham Moor went ahead, it seemed likely that an entirely new sewerage system would be needed for the Village. Mr Baume said that any decision on this would be a matter for Welsh Water, but, if Welsh Water said that the existing system was inadequate, Hook Mason would consider planning for the installation of a private sewage treatment plant.
- 1.6 Cllr Powell remarked that the absence of affordable housing and a Section 106 agreement meant that there was little or no benefit to Bodenham from the proposed development.
- 1.7 The Clerk asked whether the footpath along the A417 from Saffrons Cross Garage would be extended to the proposed point of access to the development. Mr Baume said that this could be considered.
- 1.8 Cllr Mitcheson thanked Mr Baume for describing the proposed development and for answering questions about it, and Mr Baume then left the Meeting.

2. **Apologies for Absence.** Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Roger Austin, Dennis Jackson and Robin Knott.
3. **Declarations of Interest.** Cllr Powell declared an interest in Item 12.
4. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting.** The Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd March 2015 were accepted as a correct record (Proposer; Cllr Clarke: Secunder; Cllr Pollard).
5. **Matters Arising from the Minutes.**
  - 5.1 **Minute 5.1: Patient Reference Group.** The Clerk reported that he had attended a meeting of The Marches Practice's Patient Reference Group on 16th March. He said that the main point arising from the Meeting for Bodenham was that the Surgery in Bodenham Moor is very dependent on its dispensary and that Bodenham residents are urged to use it or lose it.
  - 5.2 **Minute 5.2: Road Safety.** The Clerk reported that he had again placed an item in the *Newsletter* asking for volunteers to join the prospective Community Speed Watch team, which now had five of the required six members. The Clerk was instructed to place an item in the *Newsletter* again, but, if this failed to attract another volunteer, the matter would be closed. **ACTION: CS**
  - 5.3 **Minute 5.6: Footpath Officer.** See Item 10 below.
  - 5.4 **Minute 6.2: HGVs in Chapel Lane.** The Clerk confirmed that he had contacted First Milk about a report that one of their tankers had used Chapel Lane and that First Milk had agreed to investigate the matter.
6. **Opportunity for Members of the Public to Address the Parish Council.**
  - 6.1 **Planning Application 150871: Ashgrove Croft, Marden.**
    - 6.1.1 Mr Peter Jones spoke about the planning application for Ashgrove Croft, which seeks to place an additional 4 static caravans and 4 touring caravans on the site and to replace a proposed stables with an ablution block. He accepted that he had a vested interest in the matter, because he lives adjacent to the site, but said that he was concerned about the extent of the proposed plans, the change in ownership of the site and the implications for sewerage.
    - 6.1.2 Cllr James-Moore asked why touring caravans were included in the application. Mr Jones said that the applicant still travels. Cllr Powell asked whether limits could be placed on the development, given that the site is 0.4 hectares and the applicant owns 1.2 hectares in total, and allegedly broke a condition of a previous approval within 18 months. Cllr Millar said that the rules for such applications were different from most other applications and that the best approach would be to try to limit aspects of the application, such as specifying a limit on the numbers of caravans and specifying a time limit for future development.
    - 6.1.3 Cllr Mitcheson noted that the site lay in Marden and that it was therefore for Marden Parish Council to take the lead. However, he suggested requesting that approval of the application should be conditioned by occupancy of the site being limited to the individuals named in the application, by a requirement that the sewage disposal system be checked by the relevant authority and, if necessary, improved to meet the proposed expansion, and by no further development being permitted for 20 years. The Clerk was instructed to consult Mr David Tilford for advice on the exact wording of the Council's observations before these were submitted to Herefordshire Council. **ACTION: CS**
  - 6.2 **Telephone Kiosk Light.** Mrs Gwen Bowden reported that the light in the telephone box library had stopped working. The Clerk was instructed to ask Mr Jonathan Sant about replacing it. **ACTION: CS**
  - 6.3 **Assets of Community Value (ACVs).** Mr Tony Clark pointed out that England's Gate Inn does not appear in Herefordshire Council's list of ACVs, even though Bodenham Parish Council had resolved to register it in 2012, together with the Post Office and Saffron's Cross Garage. The Clerk referred to a recent email from Mr David Tilford, in which Mr Tilford noted that there were risks for parish councils in registering ACVs. The Clerk was instructed to liaise with Mr Tilford on the matter. **ACTION: CS**

6.4 **Debris in the Bus Shelters.** Mrs Liz Davies asked whether the Lengthsman could remove leaves and other debris from the bus shelters. The Clerk was instructed to ask the Lengthsman to do this **ACTION:CS**

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

7.1 **Communications.** Cllr Mitcheson reported that there had recently been some technical problems with the Parish Website. These had been caused by the firm hosting the Website changing its servers without any advance warning. He had therefore been in contact with Mr Richard Horlock and had been working with him on resolving the resultant issues. Cllr Mitcheson added that this had brought into focus the question of future technical support for the Website. He had the names of three people who might take over that responsibility from Mr Horlock, but this would almost certainly mean considerably expense since any new IT specialist would either have to spend a great deal of time familiarising themselves with the Website's internal design, or would have to replace or reverse engineer it entirely from scratch. Cllr Mitcheson noted that, since Mr Horlock appeared to be keen to continue providing support and had done so very promptly on this and one previous occasion within the last year, the simplest and cheapest option would be to continue relying on Mr Horlock's help and this he intended to do. He noted, however, that Mr Horlock had not submitted an invoice for his support for some considerable time. He had reminded Mr Horlock of this and an invoice could be expected shortly.

7.2 **Road Safety.** See Item 11 below.

7.3 **Health.** Cllr Powell reported that the defibrillators and the remaining cabinet had arrived, but that the cost of fitting the cabinet at the Surgery would be in the order of £330 (excluding VAT), which she had not yet accepted. She said that Dr Knight had suggested that Bodenham Community Charity might be able to fund any extra expense. Cllr Mitcheson suggested that Cllr Powell should apply to the Charity for the extra costs, bearing in mind that the Parish Council had already agreed to fund additional expenditure of up to £250, if necessary. He suggested that the time had come to avoid further delay and to bring the project to a prompt and successful conclusion; Councillors might therefore wish to increase this figure to £400. This was agreed (Proposer; Cllr Clarke: Seconder; Cllr Pollard). Cllr Clarke suggested that the defibrillators should be installed as quickly as possible and that training to use them should be arranged thereafter. **ACTION: RP**

8. **Appointment of an Internal Auditor.**

8.1 The Clerk reported that he had received documentation for preparing the annual audit, which had to be verified by an internal auditor. He proposed that Mr Paul Hemming, who had acted as the Council's internal auditor for some years, be approached. This was agreed unanimously. **ACTION: CS**

9. **The Bovis Homes Planning Application and Play Areas.**

9.1 Cllr Millar reported that he had been asked by a planning officer at Herefordshire Council whether any Section 106 money accruing from the proposed Bovis Homes development of Shuker's Field should be used to upgrade the existing playground or to install a new playground. After some discussion of the two options Cllr Powell asked for the views of a member of the public, who was present and who has young children. The member of the public suggested that money from a Section 106 agreement for the development of the land opposite England's Gate Inn should be spent on the existing playground, while money from any Bovis Homes development should be used to build a new, second playground. Cllr Clarke proposed and Cllr James-Moore seconded that this suggestion be adopted, which it was unanimously. The Clerk was instructed to report this decision to Mr Ed Thomas at Herefordshire Council and to request further information about the Section 106 agreement with Bovis Homes, such as has been provided within the Bell Homes planning application for the land opposite England's Gate Inn. **ACTION: CS**

10. **Footpath Officer**

10.1 Cllr Mitcheson reminded Councillors that the Parish had been without a Footpath Officer since May 2014 when Mr and Mrs Russell had resigned from that role. He felt that something should be done to end this unsatisfactory situation. He had therefore spoken to

Mr Mike Darley, who acted as the Footpath Officer for Marden and Sutton St Nicholas Parish Councils. Mr Darley, if appointed, could provide a similar service for Bodenham which, for example, could include walking the Parish's footpaths twice a year, producing reports complete with photographs and GPS references, strimming and maintaining footpaths, reporting damage and, where necessary, replacing fingerposts and stiles. Cllr Mitcheson noted that the appointment of Mr Darley would enable the Parish Council to join the P3 Scheme, which would bring in about £1,000 of funding and this would go some way towards defraying Mr Darley's charges. Cllr Mitcheson concluded by saying that he felt this was an initiative worth pursuing and he had invited Mr Darley to talk to the Parish Council at the 11th May Meeting.

## 11. Road Safety

### 11.1 Vehicle Activated Signs and 'Gates' for the A417.

11.1.1 Cllr Mitcheson noted that he had circulated additional quotations for vehicle activated signs (VASs). Cllr Clarke suggested that the lowest quote be accepted. Cllr Mitcheson replied that the lowest quote seemed to be very low indeed compared to the others and would need to be checked, but Cllr Pollard said that the specifications of the equipment seemed to be satisfactory. Cllr Mitcheson asked for views on whether speed indicator devices (SIDs) or VASs should be installed on the A417. The general opinion was that VASs were preferable.

11.1.2 Cllr Powell asked whether any research existed comparing SIDs and VASs. Cllr Mitcheson said that he did not know of any, but personal experience suggested that both had some effect in slowing traffic.

11.1.3 Cllr Mitcheson went on to say that he and the Clerk had met representatives from Balfour Beatty and had identified sites on the A417 for both 'gates' and VASs. However, Mr Roger Sell - Traffic Survey Technician at Balfour Beatty - believed that Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) would be needed for the installation of both VASs and 'gates', and that these would take at least 12 months to obtain, with no certainty of success.

11.1.4 Cllr Mitcheson added that Mr Sell thought that TROs were not required for SIDs, and that, if this was the case, it might be possible to deploy the Parish Council's own SID on the A417 as an interim measure until a TRO for VASs was issued. This was not, however, a task that he personally would be willing to undertake because of the risks involved.

11.1.5 Cllr Millar suggested that another option might be to contract Balfour Beatty to deploy their SIDs on the A417 on a specified number of occasions each year. This would cost about £150 (excluding VAT) per deployment, but would provide some interim traffic calming until permanent VASs could be installed.

11.1.6 After much discussion, Cllr Mitcheson pointed out that no decision should be made until it had been established whether TROs were needed or not. The Clerk was instructed to contact Mr Sell for clarification on this. **ACTION: CS**

## 12. Finance.

12.1 **Monthly Accounts.** The Clerk confirmed that the accounts had been circulated as a spreadsheet, which was then displayed. The accounts were approved (Proposer; Cllr Clarke: Seconder; Cllr Pollard), and are attached as Annex A.

12.2 **Invoices.** Cllr Jackson proposed and Cllr Pollard seconded that the following invoices be paid and this was agreed:

· Clerk's expenses (cartridge, printer paper, stamps, envelopes)	£22.66
· C Stanley Jones and Co (Church and School Signs)	£244.80
· Siward James and Arkwright Trust (BFPG room hire)	£52.50
· Siward James and Arkwright Trust (PC room hire)	£40.50
· Bodenham Parish Hall (room hire 18th February)	£16.00
· Zurich Municipal (Parish Council insurance)	£508.12
· C. D. Smith (administration fee for Lengthsman Scheme)	£310.00
· David Griffiths (mowing and spring and autumn planting)	£583.00
· Leominster Community Resource Centre (April Newsletter)	£185.00

13. **Planning.**
- 13.1 **Planning Application 150871: Ashgrove Croft, Marden. Variation of conditions to allow for the siting of an additional 4 static and 4 touring caravans and an ablution block (instead of the permitted stable block).** This planning application was considered earlier (see Minute 6.1 above)
14. **Updates.**
- 14.1 **Bodenham Flood Protection Group.** Cllr Mitcheson gave a report, which is attached as Annex B.
- 14.2 **Parish Hall.** Cllr Powell reported that, although the floor of the Parish Hall had been sanded, treated and waxed, it was already being marked by chairs. She requested that dogs should not be walked in the parish hall car park and she noted that Linda Creaton had taken over the planning of the next 'Flicks in the Sticks' season, following the retirement of Mrs Chris James. Cllr Mitcheson expressed the Parish Council's thanks to Mrs James for her many years of work in making the 'Flicks' such a successful and important part of parish life.
- 14.3 **Lengthsman.** The Clerk reported that the Lengthsman had offered to take over the planting and mowing previously undertaken by Mr David Griffiths on the latter's retirement. The Lengthsman had spoken to Mr Griffiths about his work and had subsequently submitted a quotation for the planting of summer and winter bedding around the War Memorial. This quotation was discussed and Cllr Avery proposed and Cllr Pollard seconded that it be accepted. This was agreed unanimously.
- 14.4 **Neighbourhood Plan.**
- 14.4.1 Cllr Mitcheson reported that a well-attended public Steering Group Meeting had been held in the Parish Hall on 10th March to consider the draft 'Summary and Conclusions drawn from the recent Neighbourhood Plan survey. No comments had been made on the draft, so the document had been agreed, subject to the possible inclusion of comments from Mrs Claire Rawlings, the independent planning consultant.
- 14.4.2 There had then been a question and answer session on local issues relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan. These had included:
- 14.4.2.1 Road safety on the C1125 and it had been explained that, while the Parish Council entirely agreed that traffic calming measures were much needed on The Moor, it had decided that these could not be addressed until the future of the two planning applications by Bell Homes and Bovis Homes had been determined. For the time being, therefore, the Council was concentrating on trying to secure road safety improvements on the A417.
- 14.4.2.2 The serious implications for Bodenham Moor of the Bovis Homes planning application for the development of Shuker's Field coming, as it did, in addition to the Bell Homes proposed development of the field opposite England's Gate. It was confirmed that the Parish Council would be strongly objecting to the Bovis Homes proposals on a number of grounds.
- 14.4.3 Cllr Mitcheson next reported that on Monday, 23 March the Steering Group had held a meeting with Mrs Claire Rawlings and discussed her comments on the 'Summary and Conclusions' document. They had also sought her advice on the way forward on translating the Survey findings into a fresh draft of the Neighbourhood Plan, as well as on the provision of further evidence to support the Plan. This work was now in progress, although the Steering Group could not make real progress until issues raised by the recently announced modifications to Herefordshire Council's Core Strategy were fully resolved. The most directly relevant of these was the change to the way the number of additional houses to be accommodated in the period up to 2031 is calculated. This had the apparent effect of increasing the Parish's housing 'target' by 44%.
- 14.4.4 Cllr Millar said that the Inspector had picked up on variations within the part of the draft Core Strategy dealing with rural matters which had been written by different people. She had also commented on loose usage in the draft of such terminology as "village", "parish" and "settlement". Calculations of the additional houses required up to 2031 had now to be based on the total existing housing stock in

each parish, rather than on the existing number of houses in each settlement. Cllr Millar stressed, however, that the total figure for new housing could be offset by the number of any dwellings already approved since 2011 and by a reasonable estimate of any 'windfall' developments likely to take place between the present and 2031.

15. **Correspondence Not Previously Circulated.**

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

16. **Other Business.**

16.1. **District Councillor's Monthly Report.**

16.1.1 Cllr Millar noted that he had already circulated his March Report. He drew attention to the news that the 426 bus service is to be augmented - the details to be worked out at a meeting between the Clerks of Bodenham and Stoke Prior with Herefordshire Council's transport team.

16.1.2 Cllr Millar then announced that he would not be standing for re-election on 7<sup>th</sup> May and remarked that over the past five years he had enjoyed Bodenham Parish Council meetings "more than some". Cllr Mitcheson thanked Cllr Millar for all that he had done for the Parish and for all the advice and guidance that he had given the Parish Council over the past five years. He expressed particular thanks for the help Cllr Millar had given the Bodenham Flood Protection Group in such matters as arranging meetings with Herefordshire Council and supporting 'Project Bodenham' when the installation of Environment Agency funded flood protection equipment had been in danger of stalling. Cllr Davis added his thanks to Cllr Millar for his work on protecting the 426 bus service, while. Cllr Powell said that she had been very pleased that Cllr Millar had always been apolitical in his approach to issues.

17. **Date of Next Meeting.**

17.1 The next Meeting will be held on 11th May (to include the Annual Parish and Annual Parish Council Meetings). The Meeting will start at 7.00pm.







**BODENHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP REPORT**  
**(13 APRIL 2015)**

1. **Summary of the Past Month.** Once again we have been fortunate in that rainfall over the past month has not been sufficient to raise water levels in local brooks.
2. **Monthly Meeting.** Our Meeting on Tuesday, 31 March was attended by 25 members.
3. **External Contacts.**
  - a. **Herefordshire Council.** We continue to await responses about flood reporting and signage and about the Ketch Lane and Pugh's Field culverts.
  - b. **River Lugg Internal Drainage Board (IDB).** The IDB re-surveyed the relief channel at Millcroft Farm on 23-24 March to assess the extent to which it had become silted up over the 6½ years since it was constructed. Their contractor then spent three days (25-27 March) removing the accumulated silt and restoring the channel's profile. The next task, which the Chairman and Secretary will carry out, will be to reseed it with grass and restore it to its original condition.
  - c. **Involvement of Volunteers in Achieving FCRM Outcomes.**
    - (1) As previously reported, in October 2013 the BFPG was approached by Forest Research, who had been 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. The Chairman and the Secretary completed an on-line questionnaire and then a member of the research group, Dr Bianca Ambrose-Oji, attended the BFPG's Meeting on 26 November 2013 and spent some time talking to members. She had been keen to find out why, after some 5 years since the 2007 floods, the Group still functioned, why members had volunteered in the first place and what they each got from being a volunteer. She subsequently sent her draft report to the Secretary for checking.
    - (2) Nothing further was heard until, on 16 March, the Environment Agency announced the results of this and much other research under the heading of "Investigating and Appraising the Involvement of Volunteers in Achieving Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) Outcomes". This consists of five reports which can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/investigating-and-appraising-the-involvement-of-volunteers-in-achieving-flood-risk-management-outcomes> .
    - (3) The fourth of these reports includes four case studies, of which the BFPG is one. These are all very different, but are interesting both for their diverse approaches to mitigating flood risk and for their many similarities (such as the predominance of retired volunteers and those living in rural areas, the apathy of the general population, the issue of insurance, and so on), as well as some of ideas they produce. (Bodenham's

case study is at Section 4.8.4 and is illustrated with photographs and quotes from BFPG members).

d. **Flood Resilience at a Community Level in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.** On 2 April we received an e-mail from Steven Forrest, a PhD Researcher on Flood Resilience at the University of Groningen, in which he invited the Group to take part in an on-line survey. This was part of a four year research project being conducted by an international team based at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands and Westminster University in England. The research is funded by the University of Groningen and is focussing on ways of increasing flood resilience at a community level in both countries. The present survey was aimed at obtaining a better understanding of the status of flood groups across the UK and their roles in local flood risk management and in community resilience to flooding. It was completed by the Chairman.

4. **Working Parties.** The first two working party sessions of the 2015 'season' will be held on Friday, 24 April at the Brockington Road bridge and on Friday, 8 May at a venue to be decided. Both will start at 6.00pm and Councillors are, of course, very welcome to participate.

5. **Future Social Events.**

a. **Annual Barbecue.** Mr and Mrs Schwartz have once again kindly offered to host the Annual Barbecue, which will be held at Willow Cottage on Saturday, 27 June 2015.

b. **Annual Bonfire Party.** The annual Bonfire Party will be held on Saturday, 3 October at Millcroft Farm.

c. **Annual Quiz Night.** The Annual Quiz Night will be held in the Parish Hall on Friday, 27 November 2015.

K.A.M.