

BODENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of BODENHAM PARISH COUNCIL held on
Monday, 3rd March 2014 at the Siward James Centre at 7.30 p.m.**

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

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

1. **Apologies for Absence.** There were no apologies for absence.
2. **Declarations of Interest.** Cllr Powell declared an interest in Item 10 on the Agenda. Cllr Davis declared an interest in Item 11 on the Agenda.
3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting.** Cllr Clarke stated that the word “tape” in Minute 7.1 of the Minutes of the previous Meeting should read “sludge”. The Minutes were then accepted as a correct record (Proposer: Cllr Austin; Seconder: Cllr Mitcheson).
4. **Presentation by Mr Stan Gyford and Mr Rob Garner on the Community Group’s Proposals for the Future of Bodenham Lake and Queenswood.**
 - 4.1 Cllr Clarke introduced Mr Stan Gyford and Mr Rob Garner and pointed out that part of Queenswood lies within Bodenham Parish.
 - 4.2 Mr Garner said that he is a director of New Leaf - a small cooperative - formed as a delivery arm of Herefordshire Council’s Local Nature Project. He explained that New Leaf aims to promote sustainability for the benefit of residents and has:
 - worked to reduce carbon footprints;
 - organized h-Energy;
 - put together a charter for carbon reduction in collaboration with many local organizations.
 - 4.3 Mr Garner said that, from the work of New Leaf, a vision was developed of Queenswood and Bodenham Lake becoming a beacon of sustainability in Herefordshire, which would include developing the buildings at Queenswood to the highest standards of ‘greenness’, developing a crafts programme, and selling local produce at the café and shop. He confirmed that New Leaf had joined forces with a community group headed by Mr Gyford to bid for the running of Queenswood and Bodenham Lake.
 - 4.4 Mr Gyford said that he had been given the opportunity by Herefordshire Council to submit a business plan for the running of Queenswood and Bodenham Lake and that the first draft of the business plan had been submitted on 28th February. He said that the key points of the plan are:
 - seeking transfer of ownership or, if that is not possible, a 25-year lease of Queenswood and Bodenham Lake;
 - obtaining sources of funding, which might include a friends scheme, using commercial operators, the sale of products, income from increased educational opportunities, and introducing sailing for the disabled at Bodenham Lake;
 - clearly identifying costs, most of which would apply to Queenswood and which were likely to total £80-100k *per annum*.
 - 4.5 Mr Gyford said that community support for the project was vital and the assumptions behind the business plan were being tested in various ways, including *via* a questionnaire, with a view to the Group taking over both sites by the end of the summer.
 - 4.6 Mr Garner spoke about the need to balance human use of Queenswood and Bodenham Lake with nature by, for example, improving facilities for walking, sailing

and cycling, having less grazing, introducing a complete circular walk round the Lake and possibly linking Queenswood and Bodenham Lake across the A49. He stressed that taking on Queenswood and Bodenham Lake is a considerable obligation, not least because Queenswood is an SSSI.

4.7 A question-and-answer session followed.

4.7.1 Mr David Tilford asked whether a friends scheme would apply to Queenswood and Bodenham Lake separately or together. Mr Garner replied that this remained to be decided.

4.7.2 A member of the public asked what would happen if the scheme does not go ahead. Cllr Millar said that Herefordshire Council would retain Queenswood and Bodenham Lake with basic maintenance only and with the introduction of car parking charges, while responsibility for all the Council's other leisure sites would be transferred to the relevant local parish or town councils.

4.7.3 Cllr Powell welcomed the presentation and said that in her view Bodenham Parish Council should support the scheme. She asked whether income might come from Herefordshire Council, if the sites were used to help Herefordshire Council meet its statutory commitments, such as those concerning adult and child mental health and disabilities. Mr Gyford said that the question of catering for those with mild to moderate mental health disabilities was being pursued.

4.7.4 Cllr Clarke asked about the number of employees who would be needed to operate the scheme. Mr Gyford said that there would be a core number, but he could not specify it at the moment.

4.7.5 Mr David Tilford asked what the immediate needs of the Group were. Mr Gyford said that obtaining feedback from the questionnaire was the most important immediate need.

4.7.6 A member of the public asked about wildlife. Mr Garner said that neither he nor Mr Gyford had relevant experience, as their expertise was in managing large projects, but both were passionate about, and committed to, the needs of wildlife.

4.7.7 Cllr Clarke asked about the Queenswood and Bodenham Lake Advisory Panel. Mr Gyford replied that the Panel would be disbanded, but would be reconstituted in a different form.

4.7.8 Mrs Gwen Bowden asked about car parking charges. Mr Gyford said that there was no intention to introduce car parking charges, but Mr Garner said that the size of the financial commitment required by the scheme meant that an open mind had to be kept, and he could not absolutely rule out the possible need to introduce charges. Cllr Powell asked whether, in such an eventuality, regular users might be able to be offered reduced rates in the form of a season ticket. Mr Gyford said that this would be considered.

4.7.9 Mr Bob Bowden asked about sources of income. Mr Gyford said educational visits make a loss and would need to be reviewed. He suggested that two bungalows at Queenswood could be refurbished for letting, that the café would continue to be let and that the empty office space next to the shop would be available for letting. He confirmed that the café lease would be transferred to the Group.

4.7.10 Mr Mike Stephens asked about the possibility of fishing at Bodenham Lake. Mr Gyford replied that this had not been considered, but would be.

4.7.11 Mr Alec Avery asked about sailing at Bodenham Lake, in particular whether it could be for the general public rather than just for disabled people. Cllr Millar said that the Lake had been underused by Herefordshire Council, particularly because it was sheltered from the wind and was, therefore, more suitable for disabled sailing than general usage.

4.7.12 A member of the public asked about the effect on wildlife of increased traffic to Bodenham Lake. Mr Gyford replied that his Group were aware of this.

4.8 Cllr Clarke thanked Mr Garner and Mr Gyford for their presentation and said that an open meeting on the future of both sites would be held at a later date.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes.

- 5.1 **Minute 4.1: Noticeboards.** Cllr Pollard reported that the new noticeboard was under construction.
- 5.2 **Minute 4.2: Footpath to the Chapel Lane Bus Shelter.** The Clerk reported that he had asked for an estimate of when the installation of a path might be undertaken.
- 5.3 **Minute 4.12: The Meals-on-Wheels Service.** Cllr Knott asked Cllr Millar whether he could provide an update on the changes to the Meals-on-Wheels Service. Cllr Millar said that he had no further information to report.
- 5.4 **Minute 13.4: Oak Posts in Church Road.** The Clerk reported that he had asked the Lengthsman to carry out the necessary repairs, which consisted of replacing one post. The Clerk further reported that he had asked the Lengthsman to clear vegetation from the overgrown footpath between the War Memorial and the School.
- 5.5 **Minute 5.1: Dog Fouling.** The Clerk reported that he had put an item in the *Newsletter* about dog fouling and that the Herefordshire Council Dog Warden would attend the April meeting of the Parish Council to discuss and advise on the issue of dog fouling.
- 5.6 **Minute 5.2: Repairs to the Mounting Block.** Cllr Pollard reported that the work had not been done yet.
- 5.7 **Minute 14.2: Parish Walk.** The Clerk reported that a parish walk would only take place after Balfour Beatty had appointed their locality steward for Bodenham.
- 5.8 **Minute 14.3: Potholes.** The Clerk said that he had reported to Balfour Beatty all the potholes about which he had been notified.

6. Issues Raised by Members of the Public.

- 6.1 Mrs Liz Davies reported that a large number of undelivered leaflets had been dumped in the bus shelter opposite England's Gate. The Clerk was instructed to ask the Lengthsman to remove them. **ACTION: CS**
- 6.2 Mr Tony Clark said that, because the case officer dealing with the problem of rubbish outside a house in Orchard Close now had two roles at Herefordshire Council, the matter now seemed even less likely than before to be resolved quickly. The Clerk was instructed to write to the case officer requesting that the matter be addressed as soon as possible. **ACTION: CS**
- 6.3 Mr Clark requested that an item be placed in the *Newsletter* to the effect that dog control orders are in place in Bodenham. A member of the public said that control orders apply throughout Bodenham. (See also Minute 5.5). **ACTION: CS**
- 6.4 Mrs Sasha Norris asked about proposals in the draft Neighbourhood Plan affecting Bodenham Lake. Cllr Clarke explained the situation. Cllr Mitcheson said that the comments from the two Open Days had still to be analysed.
- 6.5 Mrs Lyn Pollard reported that there were several cases of fly tipping between Bodenham Manor and Dinmore. Cllr Millar noted that a mattress had been dumped at Dinmore Spout. The Clerk was instructed to report the fly tipping. **ACTION: CS**
- 6.6 Cllr James-Moore reported that a horse had been ridden around the churchyard, causing considerable damage to the grass. The Clerk was instructed to place an item about this in the *Newsletter*. **ACTION: CS**
- 6.7 Mr David Tilford reported that *Fastershire* would offer free ICT training in Bodenham, if a venue can be provided. The Clerk was instructed to place an item about this in the *Newsletter*. **ACTION: CS**

7. Parish Plan Reports.

- 7.1 **Health.** Cllr Powell reported that the cost of a defibrillator was around £1,500, but this would include a visit from an officer to explain the use of the machine, and that the British Heart Foundation might pay about half of that sum. Cllr Powell said that the Women's Group and Carers' Group would help to raise funds for the defibrillator, which was needed because an ambulance would take more than the crucial 8 minutes to reach Bodenham in an emergency. It was agreed to discuss this

matter more fully at the next Meeting. The Clerk was instructed to place an item about this on the next agenda. Cllr Powell also reported that the Emergency Planning Group's display at the Open Days had attracted lots of attention and support.

ACTION: CS

- 7.2 **Road Safety.** Cllr Clarke said a meeting had been arranged with Justine Heath of Balfour Beatty to discuss the traffic problems in the vicinity of the Post Office.

8. **Display Boards.**

- 8.1 The Clerk reported that a set of display boards would cost in the order of £120 on the internet, but said that he would also contact a local supplier for a quotation. The Clerk was instructed to proceed with the purchase of a set of display boards.

ACTION: CS

9. **Clerk's Salary.**

- 9.1 The Clerk, Cllr Powell, who had declared an interest, and members of the public left the room for this Item which was treated as confidential in accordance with Standing Order 3.3.2.

10. **Finance.**

- 10.1 **Monthly Accounts.** Cllr Knott presented the monthly accounts which were accepted unanimously and are attached as Annex A. (Proposer: Cllr Avery; Seconder: Cllr Mitcheson). Cllr Knott commented on the healthy condition of the BFPG's accounts.

- 10.2 The following invoices were approved for payment:

- Clerk's expenses (printer paper, cartridges)	£36.00
- Cllr P James Moore (expenses - stamps)	£18.00
- Bodenham Parish Hall (room hire - Invoice PC13)	£40.00
- Bodenham Parish Hall (room hire - Invoice PC14)	£15.00

- 10.3 The invoices were approved for payment unanimously. (Proposer: Cllr Knott; Seconder: Cllr Mitcheson).

11. **Planning.**

- 11.1 The Clerk reported that the following planning applications had been received:

11.1.1 **140286/L: Brook House, The Moor: Demolish and Rebuild Rear Extension.** Mr Steve Tovagliari, the owner of the property, said that the rebuilding work would be undertaken in full accordance with the listed building status of the property. The Parish Council had no objection to the application (Proposer, Cllr Powell; Seconder, Cllr James-Moore).

11.1.2 **140426/O: Land adjacent to Stoneleigh: Site for Residential Development.**

11.1.2.1 Cllr Clarke reported that he had received letters of objection to this outline application from Mr Tony and Mrs Kay Clark, Mrs Carol Kirkpatrick and the owners of The Old Police Station. Cllr Clarke read out these letters and circulated photographs of flooding affecting the C1125 and the brook adjacent to the site. The letters, Cllr Clarke, Mr David Tilford and others listed many concerns with the application, including:

- that no affordable housing was included in the proposal;
- the large number of houses being proposed;
- the flood risk assessment not conforming to the correct Environment Agency format;
- the proposed site's proximity to an intensive livestock unit;
- the sewage treatment package not conforming to Environment Agency standards;
- the proposals adversely affecting Brook House and other neighbouring properties.

11.1.2.2 Cllr Clarke said that he had received two letters of support - from the architect and from Mrs Sarah Wilson. Cllr James-Moore stressed that the site had not been considered for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Mitcheson said that in his view Bodenham Parish Council should object to the application on nine counts, which he read out. This was accepted unanimously (Proposer: Cllr Knott; Seconder: Cllr James-Moore).

12. **Updates.**

12.1 **Bodenham Flood Protection Group.** Cllr Mitcheson gave a report, which is attached as Annex B. The Clerk was instructed to make a further request for the 500 filled sandbags and 200 empty sandbags which had not yet been delivered.

ACTION: CS

12.2 **Neighbourhood Plan.** Cllr Clarke thanked everyone who had contributed to the two very successful Open Days, which had been attended by about 160 people. Cllr Clarke said that the feedback from the Open Days would be available at the next Steering Group meeting. He added that approval of Herefordshire Council's Core Strategy was awaited.

12.3 **Parish Hall.** Cllr Powell said that no meeting of the Parish Hall Management Committee had taken place, so there was no report to give.

12.4 **Lengthsman.** See Minute 5.4 above.

13. **Correspondence.**

12.1 The Clerk reported that no correspondence had been received, which had not already been circulated.

14. **Other Business (including District Councillor's Comments).**

14.1 Cllr Millar reported that he had circulated his monthly report, which had included a report that Herefordshire Council had decided to rescind cuts to arts funding.

15. **Dates of Next Meeting.**

15.1 There being no other business, the Meeting ended at 9.35pm.

15.2 The next Meetings of the Parish Council will be held at 7.30pm at the Siward James Centre on:

- Monday, 7th April 2014

- Monday, 12th May 2014

- Monday 2nd June 2014

	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Dog bin												150
British Legion Grant								50				
TOTAL PC Expenditure	606.31	2008.99	1570.81	734.66	753.32	568.71	598.8	2699.63	1997.33	539.56	2276.61	1449.61
PC Closing Balance	9526.56	8004.99	6938.22	7444.81	10750.99	16357.62	15939	13899	12680	12370	10278	9797.1
BFPG Open Balance	2210.27	2210.27	2113.37	2099.87	2058.88	2058.88	2058.88	2412.07	2412.07	2412.07	2760.07	2915.07
BFPG Inc				30.00			494			375	155	
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	2915.07	2915.07
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
Total Closing Balance	11894.83	10276.36	9196.09	9661.69	12967.87	18764.50	18699.49	16658.77	15439.69	15478.13	13541.52	13060.16

BODENHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP REPORT
(3 MARCH 2014)

1. **Summary of the Past Month.**

a. Once again we have been extremely lucky compared with the South of England, and especially most recently the Thames Valley. We have had to keep a close eye on the situation, but overall there has been no major cause for concern. The two key factors have been:

(1) First, the way that the succession of storms we have suffered have had just enough time between them to let water get away and,

(2) Second, the presence of the relief channel which has allowed both flood water from Millcroft Road and water from the Brook to escape onto the flood plain, rather than backing up towards Bodenham Moor as it did in April 1998 and July 2007.

b. Nevertheless, there have been various degrees of flooding around the Village:

(1) The River Lugg has been very high at times; indeed, at one point at the Butts Bridge gauge in Leominster it came to within about 5 inches of the record level reached in July 2007. As a result the Ketch Lane junction was flooded from 6 - 17 February. The highest water level we recorded on the road there was 21 inches.

(2) Over the past month there have been 8 times when the telemetry system has warned us that the water level in the Brook has reached 0.5m. On two of these occasions we received the 0.9m alarm as well and enough water for the relief channel to operate. The highest water level recorded in the Brook was 1.22m on 12 February, well below what it has achieved in the past.

(3) We have also again had surface water flooding in Chapel Lane with water coming off the adjacent fields and crossing the C1125 into the East end of Orchard Close. This has highlighted one of our main concerns about Bovis Homes' proposal to build houses on Shuker's Field. Indeed, 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.

(4) On The Moor (C1125) there have 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 been, again, blocked drains, but in some cases the blockages have been so bad that there was nothing BFPG members could do. We have asked for Balfour Beatty to jet the drains.

(5) On 11 February there was also a problem in Rowberry Lane outside Blue Cedar Cottage where water was coming off the adjacent field and running down the roadside ditch, but in such quantity as to overflow into the property's drive

and threaten the house. The owners took action to block the ditch and divert the water so that it then ran down the road surface past the house. Since the Lane is little used, the quantity of water not great and the weather mild, this did not create any risk to traffic.

(6) In the Conservation Area some gardens near the Bridge were partially flooded, but the only building affected was the Church where the kitchen had some water in it.

c. It was pleasing to know that there are people outside Bodenham who are concerned for our safety. We had two visits from Mr Charles Pudge, the Chairman of the River Lugg Internal Drainage Board, and two from Les Harrison, the Board's Engineer. Cllr Jeremy Millar also visited on 16 February and I took the opportunity once again to express our concern both about the culvert in Mr Pugh's field and also the need to replace those at Ketch Lane. Quite separately, I have also completed a report on the local flooding situation for Herefordshire District Council at their request.

d. Balfour Beatty have been encouragingly proactive around the Village. They have already removed the debris from the Ketch Lane culverts which we had piled on the verge there. More importantly, they have helped us resolve a potentially serious issue there. Because the Ketch Lane culverts are so badly designed and under-sized, the older of the two, which is at right angles to the flow, tends to get filled with silt. After the recent storms this was so bad that this culvert was completely blocked and the system was therefore reduced to only half its already inadequate capacity. Fortunately, most of the build-up of silt was in the open outside the downstream end of the culvert and, fortunately also, the Secretary happened to see three Balfour Beatty workmen there last Thursday (27 February) when they turned up with a mini-digger to clear mud off the roads. They kindly diverted from that task and used the digger to clear enough of the silt bank from outside the old culvert to restore its flow.

2. **Monthly Meeting**. We held our second Meeting of the year last Tuesday (25 February) and this was attended by 39 members.

3. **Sandbags**.

a. **Redistribution of Stocks**.

(1) We have had to redistribute a lot of sandbags to replace stocks which had been depleted at Chapel Lane and in Bodenham Village. This was achieved with the help of Mr Derek Pritchard who, at no notice at all, responded to our requests for assistance on two separate occasions. On 10 February we used his tractor and trailer to move 60 sandbags from the Parish Hall through the flooded Ketch Lane junction to The Forge where we laid them out along part of the garden to protect the house. Three days later, with the help of two BFPG members, Mr and Mrs Dowler, we used Mr Pritchard's Landrover and trailer to take 60 sandbags to refill the Chapel Lane cage. We then took all the remaining sandbags from the Parish Hall and moved them to the Conservation Area, going *via* the A49 and Dinmore Hill to avoid the floods. There we refilled the cage on the car park opposite the School with 60 sandbags and delivered a further 30 sandbags to Bridge Cottage.

(2) On 14 February we received a request from Cllr Millar for sandbags to help Stoke Prior. We offered up to 50, but in the end they were not required.

b. **Current Stocks.**

(1) As a result of these redistributions, there are no sandbags at all left at the Parish Hall. Several weeks ago we ordered 500 filled sandbags to be supplied as soon as possible, but we are still awaiting delivery.

(2) As I have reported before, several months ago we also ordered 200 empty sandbags. After a long delay Balfour Beatty replied this month that they do not supply empty sandbags and suggested that we procure them from Radbournes. At our request the Parish Clerk has pointed out to Balfour Beatty that Amey Herefordshire always supplied empty sandbags in the past, that the Prime Minister has said that residents should not have to pay for sandbags, and that, by supplying us with empty sandbags and thus helping us to recycle existing biodegrading sandbags, Balfour Beatty will actually be saving themselves time, trouble and money. We have yet to receive a further response.

c. **Lessons Learnt.** These recent experiences have taught two lessons:

(1) The need for us to get local residents to think ahead and stock up with sandbags before the winter, rather than emptying our stocks in a panic when flooding is imminent or actually taking place. We will have to have a campaign in August/ September to get the message across that, if residents do not act in good time, they may find themselves without sandbags when they most need them and will then have only themselves to blame.

(2) In view of the difficulties of getting sandbags from Bodenham Moor to the Conservation Area when there is flooding, it would be sensible to have a larger stock of sandbags West of the River. This could best be achieved by some residents in the Conservation Area, especially those most at risk, having larger stocks in storage on their properties. We will discuss this with individual residents in due course.

4. **External Contacts.**

a. **BBC Radio 4 “You and Yours”.** On 13 February the Secretary and I were interviewed by the BBC for the Radio 4 “You and Yours” programme which went out the following day. A surprising number of people seem to have heard the programme and we have had a variety of responses. One was from a member of Lewes Town Council who was interested in the work of the Group and wanted to seek our advice. Another was a request for guidance from two members of a group in the New Forest and we arranged a telephone call on 27 February to discuss their problems.

b. **BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester.** On 24 February I received a telephone call from a reporter with BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester who was seeking views about the flood risk posed by Bovis Homes’ proposed development of Shuker’s Field. He recorded an interview over the telephone and I subsequently took part in a live interview on the ‘Howard and Toni at Breakfast’ programme at 7.40am on 25 February which some local residents also heard.

c. **Herefordshire Council - Road Closures.**

(1) An issue relating to the flooding which affects the C1121, Ketch Lane and Smeadals Lane in most winters is the closure of these roads to vehicles. They carry a lot of traffic, with the C1121, in particular, providing one of only two means of access to the Conservation Area, as well as a much used shortcut between the A49 and the A417. However, at present the fact that these roads were recently flooded was not shown on the Herefordshire Council 'Roads Closures and Diversions' website until the last day or so before the flooding disappeared and then the C1121 continued to be shown as being flooded, but passable with care, for about a week when in fact it was completely flood free, albeit muddy.

(2) On only two occasions this Winter have official 'Road Closed' signs been put out on Millcroft Road by Balfour Beatty and in both instances this was long after the flooding had started – indeed, only just before it disappeared. The only signs that have been put out (and taken down again) in a timely manner were those which we ourselves have deployed.

(3) We are well aware that Herefordshire Council are facing severe financial and resource pressures, so I have sent an e-mail asking whether the BFPG might be able to assist, for example, by letting the appropriate department in the Council know when a road in the Parish is flooded or otherwise obstructed – and when it is clear again. (Quite apart from flooding, the C1121 has been affected by fallen trees in recent weeks). I 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.

5. **Annual Coffee Morning**. The Group's annual Coffee Morning was held on Saturday, 8 February in the Siward James Centre and, as always, was very well attended, raising £530 to support the Group's activities and its bid to get the Ketch Lane culverts replaced. We are extremely grateful to everyone who supported us so generously.

K.A.M.