

**BODENHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD  
AT THE SIWARD JAMES CENTRE  
at 7.30 pm on Monday, 3rd November 2014**

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

District Councillor Jeremy Millar was also present.

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

1. **Apologies for Absence.** Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Jeff Pollard.
2. **Declarations of Interest.** There were no declarations of interest.
3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting.** The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th October were accepted as a correct record (Proposer; Cllr Austin: Seconder; Cllr Clarke).
4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes.**
  - 4.1 **Minute 6.2: Communications.** Cllr Mitcheson said that he yet to take action to find a successor to Mr Richard Horlock to maintain the Parish Website. **ACTION: TM**
  - 4.2 **Minute 6.3: First World War Commemoration.** Cllr Clarke said that he had contacted the School and had been told that it has no plans to commemorate WW1.
  - 4.3 **Minute 6.5: Community Asset Transfer.** Cllr Mitcheson reported that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had not as yet met to consider the matter. **ACTION: NPSG**
  - 4.4 **Minute 7.3: Patient Consultative Group.** The Clerk reported that he had approached the Surgery about the Parish Council having a member on the Surgery's Patient Consultative Group, but, having been told that he would be contacted, had heard nothing further. However, he added that he had been given an application form by the Surgery. The Clerk and Cllr Powell were asked to explore the matter further. **ACTION: CS and RP**
  - 4.5 **Minute 8.1: Road Safety.** The Clerk reported that he had still not heard directly from Mrs Justine Heath or indirectly from the Locality Steward about the data which were gathered in May and June on the C1125. The Clerk was instructed to continue attempting to contact Mrs Heath. **ACTION: CS**
  - 4.6 **Minute 9: Telephone Box.** Cllr Clarke reported that Mr Jonathan Sant had started work on converting the telephone box into a book exchange. Cllr Powell said that the telephone box needed an external clean - the glass, in particular - and that maintenance needed to be considered. Cllr Mitcheson suggested that the Lengthsman might include maintenance of the telephone box as part of his duties. The Clerk was instructed to ask the Lengthsman about this. **ACTION: CS**
5. **Opportunity for Members of the Public to Address the Parish Council.**
  - 5.1 Mrs Gwen Bowden asked whether it would be possible to have a path from the road (C1125) to the telephone box. Cllr Mitcheson said that, given the difficulty of getting Balfour Beatty to construct the proposed path to the Chapel Lane bus shelter, he thought that a path to the telephone box was unlikely to be achievable for some considerable time.
  - 5.2 Mrs Bowden went on to suggest that the converted telephone box should have a sign saying 'Library' on both its North and South sides. Cllr Clarke said that only one 'Library' sign was being made by Mr Jonathan Sant for the telephone box. The consensus was that this would be sufficient.
  - 5.3 A member of the public asked about the tree on the village green, which had lost a branch recently. The Clerk said that the Lengthsman had cleared the debris very promptly. He was instructed to contact Mr Adrian Hope of Adrian Hope Tree Services, in whose

report the tree had been described as not needing immediate attention, to ask for a quotation for the removal of the entire tree and an adjacent poplar. **ACTION: CS**

## 6. **Councillors' Reports on the Parish Plan.**

6.1 **Communications.** Already covered at Minute 4.1 above.

6.2 **Health.** Cllr Powell said that progress towards obtaining defibrillators was slow, but a coffee morning had been arranged for the end of November to raise funds and an individual donation of £100 had also been received. She asked for anyone with fundraising ideas to contact her or Mrs Margaret James. Cllr Mitcheson asked whether local firms had been asked for donations. Cllr Powell replied that Mrs James had contacted one local firm, but the firm had declined to make a donation. However, she added that a donation of £50 had been received from Saffrons Cross Garage. Cllr Knott asked what the target figure was. Cllr Powell said that the remaining target was £1,200. Cllr Mitcheson asked whether the Bodenham Community Charity had been approached. Cllr Powell said that an informal approach had been made. Cllr Knott said that he understood that the Parish Council was going to match fund the project. Cllr Mitcheson said that he did not recall that any actual decision had been made. Cllr Powell said that further fundraising activities would continue and that the Bodenham Community Charity would be approached, after which the Parish Council might be asked to contribute. Cllr Mitcheson agreed that that this was an appropriate route to follow.

6.3 **Road Safety.** Already covered at Minute 4.5 above. (See also Minute 7 below).

## 7. **Precept.**

7.1 The Clerk said that the deadline for making a decision on the Precept had been brought forward by Herefordshire Council from 31st January 2015 to 31st December 2014.

7.2 An updated Statement of Account was displayed on the screen and Cllr Mitcheson highlighted the main changes from the version which had been circulated to Councillors by e-mail before the Meeting. He noted that the opening and projected closing balances for the 2014-15 financial year more or less balanced, after the £5k earmarked for road safety had been discounted. Cllr Clarke asked whether reducing the precept for 2015-16 by £5k would retain the balance. Cllr Mitcheson said that more money would be needed for the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. It was difficult to put a figure on this, but he thought that it might amount to at least £3k-£4k.

7.3 Cllr Powell asked whether the £5k for road safety could be used for the Neighbourhood Plan, if it was not spent on road safety next year. Cllr Mitcheson said that, given that the Parish Plan had identified improvements to road safety as a high priority, the Parish Council ought to be pursuing this as a matter of some urgency – and certainly without waiting another year. The lack of feedback from Balfour Beatty about possible traffic calming measures on the C1125 (see Minute 4.5 above) had been delaying progress. However, there were other options which the Parish Council could equally well pursue, for example on the A417, and regrettably £5K was a relatively small sum where any road safety measure was concerned. Cllr Millar said that he would attempt to find answers to the road safety issue from Balfour Beatty, given that data collected on the C1125 in May had still not been acted on.

7.4 Cllr Avery suggested that, until the outcome of the planning application for Shuker's Field was known, the £5k should be retained in the budget. Cllr Powell pointed out that the proposal to extend the footpath on the A417 to England's Gate might be affected by the sale of the pub and by the planning application for the land opposite it. Cllr Knott questioned the need to set aside funding through the Precept when it should be possible to arrange for capital expenditure to be funded through the Public Works Loan Board.

7.5 Cllr Mitcheson said that the Council did not need to decide the Precept until its next Meeting on 1st December; indeed, it was important that Councillors had a proper opportunity to study the updated Statement of Account before any decision was made. He asked the Clerk to circulate the revised accounts and the draft budget on which the 2014-15 precept had been determined. Cllr Mitcheson also urged all Councillors to study these figures closely before the December Meeting. **ACTION: CS**

8. **The 426 Bus Service.**

8.1 The Clerk reported that a meeting had been held between Cllr Rone (the Cabinet Member for Transport), Cllr Millar, Mr Phillip Brown (the Parish Clerk for Humber, Risbury and Stoke Prior) and himself to discuss the 426 service. At this it had been made clear that, having awarded the contract, Herefordshire Council no longer had control over the service and that any adjustments to it would have to be negotiated between parish councils and the bus company. Cllr Millar agreed that, because the buses were deregulated, Herefordshire Council no longer had any involvement with local bus services. He added that there were minibus services in Leominster, which might provide an alternative service, but any such service would be more expensive than the buses, though less expensive than taxis. He accepted that it was very difficult for parish councils to make such arrangements, but suggested that the minibus companies had spare capacity and that in the period between taking children to schools and collecting them at the end of the school day they might be able to provide a regular service. The Clerk was instructed to explore this possibility further (in conjunction with the Clerk for Humber, Risbury and Stoke Prior).

**ACTION: CS**

9. **The Winter Maintenance Self Help Scheme.**

9.1 The Clerk reported that the Scheme was very similar to that which had operated in previous years. Cllr Mitcheson said that the document which had been circulated describing the Scheme and calling for expressions of interest in it was puzzling in that the deadline it quoted for applications had long passed. As it happened, Bodenham probably had enough salt left over from the previous year. Cllr Powell asked about the condition of this salt and whether it was properly covered. The Clerk was instructed to ask the Lengthsman to check the salt and to cover it, if necessary. No expense should be incurred because the BFPG's adjacent sandbag tarpaulin might be sufficient to cover the salt as well, if required.

**ACTION: CS**

10. **Finance.**

10.1 **Monthly Accounts.** Cllr Mitcheson said that, because an error had been identified in the monthly Statement of Accounts circulated before the Meeting and Councillors had not had sufficient time to study the updated version (see Minute 7 above), consideration of the accounts should be deferred to the December Meeting.

10.2 **Invoices.** Cllr Avery proposed and Cllr Clarke seconded that the following invoices be paid:

- C Gardening Services (Lengthsman's October invoice)	£255.00
- Siward James and Arkwright Trust (PC room hire)	£81.00
- Siward James and Arkwright Trust (BFPG room hire)	£38.25
- Claire Rawlings (Neighbourhood Plan Consultant)	£160.00
- Royal British Legion (donation in lieu of wreath)	£50.00

11. **Planning.**

11.1 The following planning applications were considered:

- **143048: New House Farm: Proposed muck store.** The Clerk reported that the regulations under which this application fell precluded any comments being made by the Parish Council on it.
- **143075/FH: Rose Cottage, Dinmore: Proposed first floor extension at rear of cottage.** The Clerk reported that Mr David Tilford had prepared a planning statement, which found that the application complied with the relevant planning regulations. Cllr James-Moore said that the Planning Sub-Committee had considered the application and had no objection to it. The Clerk was instructed to respond accordingly to Herefordshire Council. **ACTION: CS**
- **143238/F: The Cornet: Proposed general purpose agricultural building.** Mr David Tilford reported that comments were permitted on this application - unlike the New House Farm application - because the proposed agricultural building was to be sited on a field of less than 6 hectares in size. Cllr Mitcheson said that, although the application had been received very recently, Mr Tilford had provided to the effect that it met the relevant planning regulations. Cllr

James-Moore suggested that the Planning Sub-Committee should inspect the site to consider the possible intrusiveness of the proposed building. This was agreed.

**ACTION: PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE**

12. **Updates.**

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

12.2 **Parish Hall.** Cllr Powell reported that the recent Arts Alive event had been very successful. Cllr Jackson said that half of the audience had come from outside Bodenham. Cllr Powell added that the 'Flicks' season was continuing. Cllr Clarke said that attendance at the 'Flicks' films had been good and that, therefore, the Parish Hall was making a profit of about £100 on each film. Cllr Powell said that, once the figures have been finalised, the Parish Hall Management Committee was considering undertaking the refurbishment of the toilets.

12.3 **Lengthsman.**

12.3.1 The Clerk reported that details of the Enhanced Lengthsman Scheme had yet to be finalised. He added that he had queried the figure of 25.12km shown as the length of the C and U roads in Bodenham, on which the grant for the Lengthsman is based. This was because it did not correspond to the figure of 28.27km on which the grant had been based for the last three years. Cllr Millar said the new figures were lower than the old figures for every parish in his ward which participated in the Lengthsman Scheme.

12.3.2 Cllr Mitcheson, in response to a query from Cllr Powell, said that provision had been made for the Lengthsman in the 2014-15 precept budget.

12.3.3 Cllr Powell asked whether the Lengthsman could install the proposed paths to the Chapel Lane bus shelter and the telephone kiosk. The Clerk said that he doubted that this was something the Lengthsman could do, but that he would ask. Cllr Millar said that the matter could be raised at a consultation Balfour Beatty was holding in Corn Square in Leominster from 10.00-14.00 on Friday, 14th November.

**ACTION: CS**

12.3.4 The Clerk reported that the Lengthsman had completed his grass cutting duties for the year and had carried out additional tasks, namely:

1. Clearing soil from the ditch in Chapel Lane.
2. Removing the branch which had fallen from a tree on the village green (see Minute 5.3 above).

12.3.5 The Clerk asked that any requests for additional tasks for the Lengthsman should be passed on to him. (See also Minute 14.2 below).

12.4 **Neighbourhood Plan.** Cllr Mitcheson reported that the analysis of the data from the questionnaires should be completed by 7th November.

13. **Correspondence Not Previously Circulated.**

13.1 The Clerk offered for circulation the latest copy of 'Clerks and Councils Direct'. Cllr Mitcheson took the copy.

14. **Other Business.**

14.1 **District Councillor's Report.** Cllr Millar referred to his monthly report, in which he had noted the large amount of road resurfacing carried out by Balfour Beatty during the summer. He also drew attention to surveys which indicated that Hereford was now one of the top 100 shopping destinations in the UK, and that Herefordshire was one of only 6 local authorities where GCSE grades had improved in 2014.

14.2 **Playground Drainage.** Cllr Clarke said that he had been sent a photograph of a large puddle under the swings at the playground. The Clerk said that the Lengthsman had recently raked the chippings under the swings to remove a puddle, but that the problem was a recurring one. Cllr Powell said that Section 106 money accruing from the housing development on the land opposite England's Gate might be used to improve the drainage of the playground. The Clerk was instructed to ask the Lengthsman to identify a long-term solution to the problem, the previous proposal to tap into the roadside drain having been considered impractical.

**ACTION: CS**

14.3 **Bodenham Church and School Signage.** The Clerk reported that the 'Bodenham Church and School' signs had not yet been installed, despite the quotation having been accepted almost a year ago and despite frequent requests by him and promises from the supplier. Accordingly, he had obtained a quotation from a different firm for £204 + VAT for the three signs. It was agreed that this quotation should be accepted. (Proposer; Cllr Austin: Seconder; Cllr Clarke).

14.4 **Footpath BM13.** Cllr Davis asked whether the footpath past Wynmoor would be retained by the new owners, given that the way the new driveway had been marked out suggested that it would not be. Cllr Clarke said that the new owners would be aware of the footpath and that the existence of the footpath would be apparent in the deeds of the property.

15. **Date of Next Meeting.**

15.1 The next three Meetings will be held on 1 December, 5 January and 2 February.

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

**BODENHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP REPORT**  
**(3 NOVEMBER 2014)**

1. **Summary of the Past Month.** There has been a certain amount of rain over the last few weeks, including that from ex-hurricane Gonzalo However, at least in part because of all the work the Group has done this year, it has not been sufficient to affect levels in our local watercourses.
2. **Monthly Meeting.** Our monthly Meeting on Tuesday, 28 October was attended by 26 members.
3. **Sandbags.** We have received Herefordshire Council's annual request for information on the number of sandbags we hold and how many more we require. We have submitted our return through the Parish Clerk and asked for an additional 150 which we plan to place as a central reserve at the Parish Hall next to the salt bags.
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. **Convergent Volunteers Project.**
    - (1) As previously reported, Warwick University's Business School is engaged in a Defra-funded project looking at how best use can be made of 'convergent volunteers', *i.e.* those volunteers who turn up without prior warning to offer their help during a flooding emergency. On Friday, 27 June two members of the Warwickshire University team visited Bodenham and took part in a working party session in the Millcroft Brook. They also had the opportunity to talk to BFPG members over refreshments at Millcroft Farm afterwards and followed this up by conducting telephone interviews with one or two members subsequently.
    - (2) The Project Team recently sent us the full draft study report for comment. This ran to some 130 pages and drew on evidence in academic literature on the handling of volunteers, as well as examining how other countries tackle the issues raised by convergent volunteers in emergencies. So far as this country is concerned the Project has looked at three case studies – Bodenham after the July 2007 flood and Boston in Lincolnshire and Tonbridge in Kent during the floods of December 2013.
    - (3) The Bodenham case, of course, showed volunteers coming together after an emergency and trying to prevent a future one by proactive work, not least by physically clearing watercourses. The other two case studies were very different in nature and scale; Tonbridge had over 250 houses flooded and Boston about 1800. They were also different since those involved were much more concerned in how

volunteers were pulled together to clean up houses which had been flooded, how to distribute money and other donations, such as furniture and white goods, to those who had been affected by flooding, who should be responsible for organising the volunteers – for example, the local council or the British Red Cross - how communications should be arranged (a great deal of use was made of Facebook), and so on.

(4) The draft Report makes a number of recommendations, but most of these are not directly applicable to Bodenham because they are aimed at government and local authorities. Nevertheless it has made interesting reading, there are some lessons to be learnt for Bodenham, and we have commented on it fully so far as the BFPG is concerned.

c. **Defra Project - Surveying for Flood Resilience in Individual Properties.**

(1) The Secretary has been invited to join the Board of the Defra Project “Surveying for Flood Resilience in Individual Properties”. Its 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) Independent flood risk advisors will need to know where to find and assess existing data about flood risk; they will need to have a knowledge of building construction and what would be the consequences if a property was flooded; they will also require a knowledge of flood insurance, of methods of alleviating the risk of flooding both at individual and community level, and of what equipment and services are available for this. All this will lead to the definition of a skill set against which independent flood risk advisors can be properly accredited.

(3) The Project Team are trying to involve as wide a variety of stakeholders as possible and this includes ‘consumers’, *i.e.* people who have already installed PLP, or who are in the process of trying to obtain PLP and who may therefore be able to provide important insights into householders’ expectations and the affordability of PLP equipment. The stakeholders also include insurance companies because these should be interested in having a high quality scheme where they can have confidence that surveyors are fully competent. Also on the Board are representatives of local authorities and other bodies who want to see an accreditation scheme set up, as well as training organisations who will ultimately play a large part in making it work.

(4) The Secretary attended a first Meeting of the Board in London on Wednesday, 29 October and will be contributing to the further work of the Project.

d. **Northamptonshire Flood Resilience Community Pathfinder Project.**

(1) As previously reported, in December 2012 Defra launched the Flood Resilience Community Pathfinder scheme backed by £5M of government funding. As a result 13 projects have been established across the country with the aim of protecting communities where flooding is a major problem. The projects will be required to demonstrate that they can reduce the levels of flood risk in measurable

ways by finding simple, effective ways to minimise their flood risk, improving their levels of preparedness, and building confidence and increased peace of mind. This will give residents evidence about flood risk that could be taken into account by insurers and result in lower premiums.

(2) We are told that the scheme is based to some extent on what the BFPG have done here in Bodenham and the Chairman and Secretary have been invited to give a presentation to members of the Pathfinder project in Northamptonshire on 15 November. Northamptonshire is developing a community flood risk tool kit for 15 identified communities as a pilot at a cost of £384K, of which £299K is coming from Defra. We have been asked to talk under the theme of “*Real Life Flood Events and Lessons Learned*”.

e. **Fallen Trees in the River Lugg.** Two members of the BFPG, Mr Rodney Minchen and Mr Mike Mullenger, make a particular contribution to the Group’s work by monitoring the River Lugg as it passes through the Parish. For some months now they have been reporting to the Environment Agency that a number of trees have fallen into the river and constitute a potential flooding hazard. Their reports seemed to be ignored, but, as the amount of debris in the river increased, they persisted and it is pleasing to report that this has paid off as now, many months later, the obstructions in the river have been cleared.

5. **Working Parties.** The final working party session for the 2014 ‘season’ took place on Friday, 10 October. Sixteen members helped with the clearance of overgrown vegetation in the Millcroft Brook from Brockington Bridge up to the Golf Course and down to Millcroft Barn. The working party sessions will start again in April 2015.

6. **Annual Quiz Night.** The annual Fund-Raising Quiz Night will take place on Friday, 14 November in the Parish Hall. Councillors are very welcome to attend and there is the added incentive that, with the Chairman and Secretary of the BFPG unable to attend because of their visit to Northamptonshire, the chances of winning are greatly enhanced.

K.A.M.