

# BODENHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP



## MINUTES OF THE BODENHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP'S MEETING AT THE SIWARD JAMES CENTRE AT 7.30PM ON TUESDAY, 28 JANUARY 2020

ITEM	ACTION
<p><b><u>ITEM 1 - WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION</u></b></p> <p>1. The Chairman welcomed members to the January Meeting, the first of 2020 and a new decade. He remarked that, since members had last met at the end of November, there had been another significant flood – the third in as many months – in the period leading up to Christmas, but that since then, despite a lot of rain, there had been no further episodes of concern.</p> <p>2. <b><u>Apologies.</u></b> There were 20 members present and apologies were received from Mr Baker, Mr Bowden, Mr and Mrs Burnill, Miss Easson, Miss Gibson, Mr and Mrs Hemming, Mr Maxwell, Mrs Phipps, Miss Price, Mr Sebbage and Mr Tilford.</p>	
<p><b><u>ITEM 2 – MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</u></b></p> <p>3. The Chairman asked members to approve the Minutes of the November Meeting. These had been circulated earlier with the Agenda and were also available in hard copy on the tables. Acceptance of the Minutes was proposed by Mrs Bowden, seconded by Mrs Clark and agreed.</p>	
<p><b><u>ITEM 3 – MATTERS ARISING</u></b></p> <p>4. <b><u>Annual Quiz Night (Friday, 29 November 2019).</u></b></p> <p>a. The Chairman reminded the Meeting that Mr Bowden had suffered a stroke just before the Quiz Night and as a result Mrs Bowden had been unable to carry on as the organiser of the event. On behalf of the Group, he expressed his thanks to Mr and Mrs House for taking over the event at very short notice and, with the help of the Mr and Mrs Clark, running a very successful Quiz Night.</p> <p>b. He added that he was pleased to say that, as many would know, Mr Bowden was making steady progress with his recovery. However, this would inevitably take some time, and so to try and alleviate the pressure already on Mrs Bowden from this and her Leisure Club, Parish Hall and other commitments, Mr and Mrs House had very kindly agreed to take over as Area Representatives for part of Brockington Road in Mrs Bowden's place. The Chairman thanked Mr and Mrs House once again for their continued support and for taking on this new role.</p> <p>5. <b><u>Bodenham Natural Flood Management Project.</u></b></p> <p>a. The Chairman reported that the second Meeting of the Bodenham Brooks NFM Community Group had been held on the evening of Thursday, 28 November</p>	

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<p>at the Siward James Centre. It had been chaired by Mrs Bethany Lewis, the Project Officer. Mr Tom Jolly, the Catchment Advisor from the Wye and Usk Foundation, who has the task of liaising with farmers and landowners on the implementation of NFM measures, was also present, together with ten local residents.</p> <p>b. Mrs Lewis and Mr Jolly reported on the progress of the Project across the County generally and in Bodenham in particular. Here a number of local landowners have been contacted and planning is going ahead for the reinstatement of an attenuation pond and for the construction of about a dozen leaky dams. Measures, such as cover cropping and ‘no tillage’ regimes, are also being discussed with local farmers with the aim of improving soil structure and better water retention. Of the £31K in NFM grants so far given out across the County, about £4K has been allocated within the Parish.</p> <p>c. This is a pilot project and the Environment Agency are emphasising the need to gather evidence of the success or otherwise of the NFM measures being employed. This is so that the data can form a basis for decision-making on possible future deployment across the country. Much of the Meeting was therefore devoted to providing feedback to Mrs Lewis on the location, timing and extent of flooding in the Parish over the past two months. This added to the data she is gathering about the relationships between, for example, the levels of rainfall measured at the new rainfall gauge at Marsh Court Farm, the level of the Millcroft Brook measured by the telemetry system at Brockington Road Bridge, the height of the River Lugg at Butts Bridge in Leominster, and the depth of flood water at the Ketch Lane junction. Finally, the scope for volunteers to help with monitoring watercourses and the ways in which Herefordshire Council’s dissemination of information during flood events could be improved were both briefly discussed.</p>	
<p><b><u>ITEM 4 - TREASURER’S REPORT</u></b></p>	
<p>6. On behalf of the Treasurer, the Chairman reported that the balance in the Group’s account at the end of November had stood at <b>£4,285.41</b> not counting the refund of the VAT of £5.99 from the purchase of the DPC for the sandbag cages which was still outstanding.</p> <p>7. The Chairman said that during December and January there had been:</p> <p>a. <b>Income</b> of £371.00, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A donation of £20.00;</li> <li>• Quiz Night Entry charges totalling £220.00;</li> <li>• Proceeds from the Raffle amounting to £131.00.</li> </ul> <p>b. <b>Expenditure</b> of £64.25, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nibbles for Quiz Night £15.00;</li> <li>• Room Hire at Siward James for October and November £11.25;</li> <li>• Hire of the Parish Hall for the Quiz Night £38.00.</li> </ul> <p>8. The total funds raised for the Quiz Night after expenses had been £328.00.</p> <p>9. The balance at the end of January stood at <b>£4592.16</b>, excluding, of course, the outstanding VAT refund from the DPC of £5.99.</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p><b><u>ITEM 5 – FLOODING</u></b></p> <p>10. The Chairman remarked that members would be familiar with the flood-related events of the past two months since they had lived through them. He therefore proposed to outline only the more significant events for the Meeting. However, memories were short and he felt that it was important to have a proper record for future reference and he therefore proposed to include a more detailed account in the Minutes.</p> <p>11. Continuing, he said that, after the floods of 26-29 October and 14-18 November, the third major flood of the year had been preceded by a minor episode lasting from early on Monday, 16 December through to the morning of Wednesday, 18 December. During this period the flooding on the C1121 at the Ketch Lane junction had reached 11 inches (0.28m) for a time. This had been mainly contributed by the River Lugg. However, the Millcroft Brook had played a supporting role, although its level had reached a maximum of only 0.435m (in the early hours of 15 December) - not enough for the telemetry system to trigger an alarm.</p> <p>12. After a respite of about 24 hours, during which the Ketch Lane junction was more or less clear and the level of the River Lugg at Butts Bridge in Leominster had fallen to 2.0m – well inside its ‘normal’ range - the main event had begun on Thursday, 19 December. By that evening, with continuing rain both locally and in the Welsh hills, flooding at the Ketch Lane junction was already 10 inches (0.25m) deep and the River Lugg at Butts Bridge was back up to 3.00m and rising. A day later, at 5.00pm on Friday, 20 December, the C1121 at the Ketch Lane junction had been up to 26 inches (0.66m) under water, with the levels in the South end of the C1113 (Ketch Lane) and the North end of the C1120 (Smeadals Lane) a few inches deeper still.</p> <p>13. Once more, the Millcroft Brook had played its part. It had been running high for some time and finally triggered the first telemetry system (0.5m) warning at 12.15pm on 20 December, followed by the second, more general (0.9m) warning at 1.45pm. The water level in the Brook had peaked at 1.093m at 2.40pm, the highest for a number of years, but it was down to 0.9m by 3.25pm and 0.5m by 5.00pm.</p> <p>14. The River Lugg at Butts Bridge had peaked at 3.35m at about 8.00pm that evening (20 December), only 10 inches (0.25m) short of its highest recorded level of some 3.6m in July 2007. Indeed, each of the three recent floods had been nearly as bad as that of 12½ years ago, the difference being that Bodenham Moor is now better prepared, with the key watercourse and culverts cleared every year and greatly improved flood defences in the form of the relief channel and its associated bunds.</p> <p>15. Over the next three days the Lugg had gradually fallen, reaching the top of its ‘normal’ level (2.6m) at about 11.00pm on Monday, 23 December. The flooding at Ketch Lane had followed about 5 hours behind this slow decline and it had not been until the early hours of Christmas Eve that the Ketch Lane junction was finally back to normal.</p> <p>16. Once again, the depth of water at the Ketch Lane junction had been measured twice each day while flooding was present. The results had been published on the Parish Website and on <i>NextDoor</i> as a guide to those wishing to use the three roads affected, and this seemed to have been appreciated.</p> <p>17. Elsewhere in the Parish, the pattern of recent floods had been repeated. The Church had been flooded yet again, forcing the Carol Service to be held in the Parish Hall and the other Christmas services in the School. Once more, there had been surface water for a time on the C1125 outside Eastfields Farm and between Berrington Drive and</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>England's Field, as well as in front of the Chapel in Chapel Lane (C1114), with water spilling across the C1125 into Orchard Close. Again, the issue there had been the usual one of leaves blocking the drains unless these were constantly kept clear. Flooding had also been reported from Maund Bryan where the A417 had been closed for a time and, for example, the grounds, garage and stables of Willow Cottage had again been under water, although none had entered the house.</p> <p>18. Finally, turning to the period since Christmas, the Chairman said that, thankfully, he had much less to report. Several storms had brought high winds and a lot of rain and this had fallen on already saturated ground. However, the intervals between the storms had been sufficient to allow water, both in the River Lugg and in local watercourses, to get away. As a result there had been no flooding during January and the telemetry system had issued only three 0.5m alarms. Again, the Chairman said that he would provide more detailed information in the Minutes 'for the record', this being that the alarms had been on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Thursday, 9 January at 2.50am. The water had peaked at 0.581m at 3.10am and had fallen below 0.5m at 4.10am.</li> <li>b. Monday, 13 January at 7.00pm. The water had peaked at 0.657m at 7.20pm and had fallen below 0.5m at 8.15pm.</li> <li>c. Tuesday, 14 January at 8.05pm. The water had peaked at 0.596m at 8.25pm and had fallen below 0.5m at 9.00pm.</li> </ul>	
<b><u>ITEM 6 – WATERCOURSE MAINTENANCE</u></b>	
<p>19. <b><u>The Moor Brook.</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The Chairman recalled that at the October Meeting he had reported that Mr and Mrs Maxwell had had concerns for some time about the high level and sluggishness of the Moor Brook and the possibility that these indicated blockages downstream. Both he and Mr Maxwell had contacted Mr Les Harrison, the Area Engineer for the River Lugg Internal Drainage Board (IDB), who had visited them and inspected the Brook as far as he could while the maize crop was still in the fields. In his view any slowing of the Brook was likely to be owing to vegetation, such as reeds and flag irises, growing in the bed of the Brook downstream from the C1125 bridge. This could only be confirmed once the maize had been harvested and contractors could start on clearing the Brook.</li> <li>b. This work had been planned for early November, but none had been possible during either November or December because of the atrocious weather. However, the Chairman said that he was glad to report that, despite extremely difficult ground conditions, clearance of the Brook had finally been completed by the IDB over the past three weeks. It was to be hoped therefore that the flow past Brook Cottage had been improved and was no longer a matter for concern.</li> </ul> <p>20. <b><u>Spraying.</u></b> The Chairman reported that the permission he had been granted by the Environment Agency to spray local watercourses with herbicide during 2017, 2018 and 2019 had now expired. He had therefore applied for an extension. He had hoped that this would be for another three years, but he had been informed that three year permissions were no longer granted – a fresh application had to be made every year. He had not yet heard whether or not he would receive permission for 2020.</p>	

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<p><b><u>ITEM 7- EXTERNAL CONTACTS</u></b></p> <p>21. The Secretary, <i>via</i> Cllr John Harrington, Bodenham’s Ward Councillor, had been put in touch with Cllr Carole Gandy of Mortimer Ward. Her Ward had suffered flooding issues at the end of 2019 and Cllr Harrington had made her aware of the work of the BFPG. The Secretary had emailed Cllr Gandy to suggest that she might like to look first at the Group’s history on the Bodenham Parish Website and perhaps also contact Mrs Mary Dhonau. The Secretary had added that, once Cllr Gandy has seen what our issues have been, and how we have addressed them, she might like to visit one of our working party sessions, or attend one of the Group’s monthly meetings. The Secretary will update the Group as this liaison with Mortimer Ward continues.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>
<p><b><u>ITEM 8 – SOCIAL CALENDAR</u></b></p> <p>22. <b><u>Fund-Raising Coffee Morning (8 February 2020)</u></b>. The Chairman reminded members that Mrs Davies had kindly agreed to organise the annual Coffee Morning, as she had done over the past 11 years. The Coffee Morning will be held on <b>Saturday, 8 February 2020</b> at the Siward James Centre from 10.00 am until 12.00 noon. It will feature a Bring and Buy Table, Cake Stall, Raffle and refreshments, as well as the annual display of BFPG photographs taken over the past year. Mrs Davies confirmed that she had sufficient helpers to run the event on the day.</p> <p>23. <b><u>Future Social Events.</u></b></p> <p>a. The Chairman suggested that members might like to start thinking about possible dates and venues for the Group’s other annual events. He stressed that, although these had now become part of BFPG tradition, members were under no obligation to hold them and were perfectly at liberty to suggest alternatives. However, a decision now or at the February Meeting would help ensure that dates were fixed in members’ diaries and that venues could be booked in good time. The events could also be advertised well in advance, which might just help with the recruitment of new members, ideally before the start of the working party ‘season’ in April/May.</p> <p>b. The Chairman reminded the Meeting that the ‘traditional’ events were:</p> <p>(1) <b><u>The Annual Barbecue.</u></b> This has usually been held on a date in July, which does not clash with the Church Fete, and (ideally) at a different venue each year. (<b>Afternote:</b> Mr and Mrs Schwartz have very kindly said that they would be willing to host the event. The date offered is Saturday, 4 July at 6.00pm at Willow Cottage.)</p> <p>(2) <b><u>Annual Bonfire Party</u></b> This is usually in September or early October at Millcroft Farm unless anyone else would like to host it. The date suggested is Saturday, 10 October at 6.00pm at Millcroft Farm.</p> <p>(3) <b><u>Annual Quiz Night.</u></b> This usually on the last Friday in November, but is dependent on the Quiz Master and the venue being available on that date. (<b>Afternote:</b> Friday, 27 November has been suggested to Mr and Mrs Moule and they have agreed once again to be the Quiz Masters for the event.)</p>	<p>All</p>

ITEM	ACTION
<p><b><u>ITEM 9 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></b></p> <p>24. <b><u>Date of the Next Meeting.</u></b> The next Meeting will be held at the Siward James Centre at 7.30pm on Tuesday, 25 February 2020.</p> <p>25. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.10 pm.</p>	<p><b>All</b></p>

KA Mitcheson  
Chairman

25 February 2020