

# BODENHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP



**MINUTES OF THE BODENHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP'S  
MEETING AT THE SIWARD JAMES CENTRE  
AT 7.30PM ON TUESDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2019**

ITEM	ACTION
<p><b><u>ITEM 1 - WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION</u></b></p> <p>1. The Chairman welcomed members to the October Meeting and commented that the rain over the past weekend (26-28 October) had had one very minor, but (to him) very welcome benefit – it had relieved him of the problem of having to think up every month a different way of saying that “despite the recent rain, there has been no risk of flooding”.</p> <p>2. He noted that the last time that the water level in the Millcroft Brook had risen far enough to trigger the telemetry system into issuing an alarm was over 19 months ago (16 March 2018) and it was perhaps inevitable that a degree of complacency had crept in in some quarters. However, the risk of flooding in the past few days had been very real and very serious and had served to provide a wake up call for us all. He would return to this later.</p> <p>3. <b><u>Apologies.</u></b> There were 22 members present and apologies were received from Cllr and Mrs Avery, Mrs Burnill, Miss Gibson, Mr and Mrs Schwartz and Mr Sebbage,</p>	
<p><b><u>ITEM 2 -- MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</u></b></p> <p>4. The Chairman asked members to approve the Minutes of the September Meeting, as amended. These had been circulated earlier with the Agenda and corrected versions were also available in hard copy on the tables. Acceptance of the Minutes was proposed by Mr Clark, seconded by Mr Dowler and agreed.</p>	
<p><b><u>ITEM 3 – MATTERS ARISING</u></b></p> <p>5. <b><u>Annual Bonfire Party.</u></b> The Chairman thanked all those who had supported the Annual Bonfire Party at Millcroft Farm on Saturday, 12 October. Some 20 members had braved the weather, which had not been kind and which had affected the bonfire itself, meaning that it had only partially burnt out. Mrs Bowden thanked the Chairman for his hospitality on that evening and the Chairman responded by particularly thanking all those who had brought along some very tasty eats and drinks to supplement the usual mulled cider, mulled wine and nibbles.</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 September had stood at £4,271.16. There had been no income during October, but one item of expenditure, which was £15.75 for the hire of the Siward James meeting room from June until September.</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>7. The balance at the end of October was now £4,255.41. The VAT from the purchase of the DPC for the sandbag cages had been £5.99 and the Parish Clerk had been asked to reclaim this amount and credit it to the BFPG Account.</p>	
<p><b><u>ITEM 5 – THE FLOOD OF 26-28 OCTOBER 2019</u></b></p>	
<p>8. Returning to the subject of the recent flood, the Chairman said that the telemetry system had issued its first (0.5m) warning to himself and the Secretary at 4.00am on Saturday morning (26 October) and this had been followed by the second, more general (0.9m) warning at 10.50am. By this time he had raised the ‘gates’ on the relief channel at Millcroft Farm and water was beginning to flow through the channel, which went into full operation for the next five hours. The water level peaked at 1.019m at 12.40pm, at which time it was just touching the underside of the sewage pipe at the Brockington Road bridge. It then fell back to 0.9m and 0.5m at 2.25pm and 6.00pm respectively. Over the same period the depth of the water on Millcroft Road, which had spilled onto the road from the Brook from mid-morning onwards, gradually reduced, but the Ketch Lane junction remained flooded overnight and passable by cars only with care. (All times BST).</p> <p>9. The key point to note was that the main bulk of the water in the Millcroft Brook was successfully got away into the River Lugg before the rain from the Welsh hills reached us down the Lugg. The river level at Butts Bridge just South of Leominster did not peak until 7.45pm on Saturday and remained at 3.31m until 1.15pm on Sunday. (This compares with the highest recorded level of 3.59m on 21 July 2007).</p> <p>10. We began to feel the effects of this from about 7.00am on Sunday when flood water from the river spread up Millcroft Road to much the same point as in 2007. The fact that this caused nobody with houses next to the Brook any particular concern is a tribute to the work, not only of BFPG members, but to that of the River Lugg Internal Drainage Board (IDB) in constructing the relief channel and making other engineering improvements in 2007-08.</p> <p>11. The Chairman remarked that the main issue had been the usual one that flooding made the C1113 (Smeadals Lane and Ketch Lane) and the C1121 (Millcroft Road) between Bodenham and Bodenham Moor impassable, except to 4x4s and tractors, during most of Saturday when the Millcroft Brook took over the road and then during most of Sunday and Monday when the River Lugg did the same. In fact, at its highest point on Sunday evening the water at the Ketch Lane junction was flowing fast and 31 inches deep, compared with 21 inches in previous years. The usual ‘Flood’ and ‘Road Closed’ signs were in place from about 9.00am on Saturday morning onwards, but despite this there had been the usual crop of four or five drivers who had ignored the signs, had come to grief and had to be rescued.</p> <p>12. The Chairman said that so far he had been recounting events mainly in relation to the Millcroft Brook. He appreciated that the Moor Brook had been affected rather differently and that Mr and Mrs Maxwell had had concerns for some time about the high level and sluggishness of the Brook which indicated possible blockages downstream. He invited Mr Maxwell to report on what had happened at Brook House and Mr Maxwell replied that by 12.00 noon on Saturday, 26 October the front garden at Brook House was under water, at some places over 12 inches deep, and four inches of water had reached the front door of the house. This water had come from the Brook House relief channel, not from the Moor Brook itself, and</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>he thought that another five hours of torrential of rain might well have seen the water enter the house.</p> <p>13. Mr Maxwell added that the water level in the grounds of Brook House had peaked around 1.00pm on Saturday. However by 7.00am on Sunday, 27 October all the water had gone apart from a few puddles and the level in the relief channel and the Brook had dropped by 1½ feet. He added that he was grateful to the Chairman for the support he had given in trying to find the reason for the high level and slowness of the water in the Moor Brook. All the indications were that this was owing to vegetation, such as reeds and flag irises, growing in the bed of the Brook downstream from the C1125 bridge.</p> <p>14. The Chairman commented that Mr Les Harrison, the IDB’s Area Engineer, had been made aware of the situation in the previous week and had visited both Brook House and himself to discuss what could be done. The maize in the fields by the Brook has now been harvested, and Mr Harrison has stated that the contractors will start work in the week commencing 4<sup>th</sup> November to help to minimise the problem.</p> <p>15. The Chairman then took the opportunity to thank all the members of the Group who had worked hard during the Spring and Summer to maintain the local watercourses. In his view there were two reasons why the recent flood had passed without serious incident despite reaching a level not seen since 2007. The first was that their efforts had ensured that all the water coming down the Millcroft Brook from the East was able to reach the River Lugg without delay. The second was the work of the IDB in 2007-08 in constructing the relief channel at Millcroft Farm. Yet again this had operated successfully both in diverting the water surging down the Millcroft Brook and in later diverting the flooding from the River Lugg as it backed up the Brook.</p>	
<p><b><u>ITEM 6 – SANDBAGS</u></b></p> <p>16. The Chairman remarked that, as he had said at the beginning of the Meeting, the events of the weekend had been a wake up call. Every year the Secretary sent out emails reminding everybody on the BFPG’s mailing list to check their flood precautions and to confirm how many sandbags they had, whether or not the sandbags were in good repair, whether they needed more, and so on. Despite this, over the weekend there had been a number of instances in which people on the list had found themselves faced with possible flooding and had asked for sandbags as a last minute emergency.</p> <p>17. Clearly in most cases they had either not bothered to think ahead and request the sandbags they needed in good time, or they had failed to look after the sandbags they already had to ensure that these were fit for use when the emergency arose. In one case a householder who in the past had repeatedly confirmed that they had over 50 sandbags, had denied that they had had any at all..</p> <p>18. The Chairman said that the lesson was simple – be prepared. So far as sandbags are concerned work out how many you need well in advance; request and collect them in good time; store them properly; check them regularly; and immediately repair or replace any that are no longer fit for purpose. The same principles apply to other flood precautions such as flood barriers, warm and waterproof clothing, wellingtons, torches and their batteries, etc. You may never need them, but you just might - and then, if they are not ready, it will be too late.</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>The BFPG is a small group of volunteers and it may not be possible for it to provide sandbags when flooding is imminent or actually happening because it is then that members will be concentrating on their first priority of ensuring the wellbeing of vulnerable local residents. (<b>Afternote.</b> The Chairman would like to thank Mr and Mrs Devereux who, although not members of the Group, helped residents in Bodenham whose house was in serious danger of flooding, by obtaining the key to the sandbag cage at the school car park and taking sandbags to the affected property, as well as helping with pumps).</p>	
<p><b><u>ITEM 7 – SECOND NFM COMMUNITY GROUP MEETING</u></b></p> <p>19. The Chairman reported that the Second Bodenham Brooks NFM Community Group Meeting will be held from <b>6.30pm to 7.30pm on Thursday, 28 November at the Siward James Centre.</b></p> <p>20. The Agenda will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on the NFM Project</li> <li>• Update on the Bodenham Brooks Catchment</li> <li>• The Catchment Delivery Plan</li> <li>• Monitoring</li> <li>• AOB</li> </ul> <p>21. All are welcome to attend the Meeting and all those who signed up to contribute to the Project should have already received an invitation. Everybody who wishes to attend are asked to let Mrs Bethany Lewis know on 01432-260739 or 07792-880030 or at <a href="mailto:Bethany.lewis@herefordshire.gov.uk">Bethany.lewis@herefordshire.gov.uk</a>.</p>	<b>All</b>
<p><b><u>ITEM 8 – WORKING PARTIES</u></b></p> <p>22. <b><u>Previous Working Parties.</u></b> The Chairman noted that there had not been a working party since the Group met at Brook House. He reminded the Meeting that a working party session had been provisionally planned for some time in October to help Mr and Mrs Schwartz by tackling vegetation in the watercourse outside Willow Cottage at Maund Bryan. However, he had spoken to Mr Schwartz about this and it had been agreed that, although the watercourse was not entirely clear, there was no need for a working party at this stage.</p> <p>23. <b><u>Future Working Parties.</u></b> The Chairman said that no further working party sessions were planned for 2019. He would assess the situation in the Spring of 2020 and decide when to start the maintenance for that year.</p>	
<p><b><u>ITEM 9 – SOCIAL CALENDAR</u></b></p> <p>24. <b><u>Annual Quiz Night.</u></b></p> <p>a. The Chairman reminded the Meeting, once again, that this year’s Quiz Night will be held <b>at 7.30pm on Friday, 29 November</b> and that the Secretary has booked the Parish Hall from 5.00pm until 10.00pm that evening. The cost will be £5.00 per person. Mrs Bowden has kindly agreed to organise the event and, if anyone would like to offer her their help, they should please contact her direct or let the Secretary know. Advertising posters will state that those attending should bring their own drinks and nibbles for the evening. This will help to ease the load on Mrs Bowden and</p>	<b>All</b>

ITEM	ACTION
<p>her organising team.</p> <p>b. Mr and Mrs Clark have kindly agreed to run the Raffle and Mr Clark asked anyone who had any suitable prizes for the raffle please to contact him. They could bring any items to the November Meeting, but, if planning to do this, should let him know in advance. It was agreed that the aim should be to have no more than about 10 good prizes.</p> <p>c. Mrs Bowden said that everyone was welcome to attend and asked members to help spread the word. The Chairman noted that there would be a further opportunity for her to encourage participation and deal with any final arrangements at the next Meeting on Tuesday, 26 November.</p> <p>d The Secretary has printed the posters and flyers for Mrs Bowden and these will shortly be appearing around the Parish. She has already sent the details to the Parish <i>Newsletter</i> and to Marden and Sutton Newsletters and the event is on the Parish Website. It will be placed on <i>Next Door</i> and <i>The Hereford Times</i> nearer the date. The new flyers advertising future events were also on each table and members were asked to hand these out to anyone they think would be interested in joining the Group.</p>	<p><b>All</b></p> <p><b>All</b></p> <p><b>Secretary</b></p> <p><b>All</b></p>
<p>25. <b><u>Fund-Raising Coffee Morning (8 February 2020).</u></b></p> <p>a. The Chairman again noted that Mrs Davies has kindly agreed to organise the fund-raising Coffee Morning in 2020, as she has done over the past 10 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. The Secretary confirmed that she had booked the room with the Siward James Warden.</p> <p>b. Mrs Davies asked for small or medium items for the Bring and Buy stall, rather than large items such as furniture. There would also be the Cake Stall, Raffle and of course, refreshments. She would be reminding members about this at the November Meeting. She had already recruited some members of her team, but, if anyone else would like to help, they should please contact her direct.</p>	<p><b>All</b></p>
<p><b><u>ITEM 10 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></b></p>	
<p>26. <b><u>Date of the Next Meeting.</u></b> The next and final Meeting for 2019 will be held at the Siward James Centre at 7.30pm on Tuesday, 26 November.</p> <p>27. There being no further business the Meeting closed at 8.10 pm.</p>	

KA Mitcheson  
Chairman

26 November 2019