

BODENHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP



MINUTES OF THE BODENHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP'S MEETING AT THE SIWARD JAMES CENTRE AT 7.30PM ON TUESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2020

ITEM	ACTION
<p><u>ITEM 1 - WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION</u></p> <p>1. The Chairman welcomed members and visitors to the February Meeting and gave a particular welcome to Mr Graham Webb and Mr John Major who were visiting from Wellington. He commented that, if anyone had been feeling relaxed about flood risk a month ago, Storm Dennis should have shaken that complacency somewhat. So far as he was aware, apart from the Church and two houses in the Conservation Area, and a number of garages and gardens in Bodenheim Moor, the Parish had emerged relatively unscathed, but it had been a very close run thing.</p> <p>2. He said that, as members would be aware, this was a rather special Meeting because Cllr Sue Maxwell and others had very generously provided cakes and biscuits, and so there would be refreshments available. However, to avoid the Meeting degenerating into a kind of tea party, he proposed to get the formal business of the Meeting out of the way first. There would then be a short intermission while refreshments were served; and this could be followed by a general discussion of the recent flooding.</p> <p>3. <u>Apologies.</u> There were 25 members, 11 other local residents and 2 visitors present and apologies were received from Mr and Mrs Buck, Mr and Mrs Burnill, Mr and Mrs Dowler, Mr and Mrs Hemming, Mr and Mrs House, Mr and Mrs Sebbage, Mr and Mrs Schwartz, Mr Bowden and Mrs Fryer.</p>	
<p><u>ITEM 2 – MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</u></p> <p>4. The Chairman asked members to approve the Minutes of the January 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 Mr Clark, seconded by Mrs Bowden and agreed.</p>	
<p><u>ITEM 3 – MATTERS ARISING</u></p> <p>5. <u>Annual Fund-Raising Coffee Morning (Saturday, 8 February 2020).</u> The Chairman thanked Mrs Davies and her stalwart team of helpers for yet another hugely successful fund-raising Coffee Morning at the Siward James Centre on Saturday, 8 February. The total raised after expenses was £450.00. This brought the total raised by Mrs Davies and her helpers since her first Coffee Morning in 2009 to an amazing £5,103.00. The Chairman remarked that it was good to have seen the new Ward Councillor for Hampton Ward, Cllr John Harrington, at the Coffee Morning and he</p>	

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<p>concluded by thanking all those who had supported the event by attending, by donating cash, cakes or other items for sale, or in any other way.</p> <p>6. <u>Watercourse Maintenance.</u> The Chairman said that he did not think that there was anything to add to the discussion of watercourse maintenance at the last Meeting, except to report that he had now received permission from the Environment Agency to carry out spraying this year. All being well, he hoped that working party sessions would start in April. To ease the Group gently into the annual maintenance tasks around the Village, he suggested that it would be a good idea to start with replenishing those sandbag cages which had been relieved of their contents over the winter. More details would follow from the Secretary in due course.</p> <p>7. <u>Future Social Events.</u></p> <p>a. <u>Annual Barbecue.</u> The Chairman said that, as members would have seen from the January Minutes, Mr and Mrs Schwartz have very kindly offered to host the Barbecue. The date offered is Saturday, 4 July at 6.00pm at Willow Cottage and Mr and Mrs Schwartz have said that they will provide burgers and buns and salads, while they would very much like those attending to bring puddings. There being no other suggestions for an alternative venue or date, the Chairman thanked Mr and Mrs Schwartz in their absence for their generosity, especially since they had hosted the event on several previous occasions. He added that the Secretary would send out more details nearer the time.</p> <p>b. <u>Annual Bonfire Party</u> The Chairman offered Saturday, 10 October at 6.00pm at Millcroft Farm for the Bonfire Party and, again, details would be sent out by the Secretary nearer the date.</p> <p>c. <u>Annual Quiz Night.</u> The Chairman reminded members that the Quiz Night was usually held on the last Friday in November, but was dependent on the Quiz Master and the venue being available on that date. As members would have seen from the January Minutes, Mr and Mrs Moule have once again agreed to be the Quiz Masters for the event. The Secretary has therefore booked the Parish Hall for Friday, 27 November. The Chairman asked Mrs Bowden whether she would like to consider running the event again this year and she confirmed that she would be pleased to do so.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p>																														
<p><u>ITEM 4 - TREASURER'S REPORT</u></p> <p>8. The balance at the end of January stood at £4,592.16. There were no invoices for expenditure during February, while income was:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="293 1697 1150 2074"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Donation BFPG Coffee Morning</td> <td></td> <td>£30.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BFPG Coffee Morning</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Raffle</td> <td>£150.00</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Refreshments</td> <td>£65.00</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bring & Buy</td> <td>£96.50</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cake Stall</td> <td>£68.00</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Donations</td> <td>£70.50</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Totals</td> <td>£450.00</td> <td>£450.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Income for February</td> <td></td> <td>£480.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Donation BFPG Coffee Morning		£30.00	BFPG Coffee Morning			Raffle	£150.00		Refreshments	£65.00		Bring & Buy	£96.50		Cake Stall	£68.00		Donations	£70.50		Totals	£450.00	£450.00				Total Income for February		£480.00	
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<p>9. Once the invoice for the hire of the Siward James Centre has been paid - it should be £30.00 - the profit from the Coffee Morning will be £450.00.</p> <p>10. The balance at the end of February is £5,072.16, which excludes the outstanding VAT refund from the DPC of £5.99.</p>	
<p><u>ITEM 5 –FLOODING</u></p> <p>11. The Chairman introduced the subject of flooding by saying that he proposed to give only a brief summary of recent events, but, as he had done last month, include a more detailed account in the Minutes ‘for the record’ and possible future reference, as well as input to the Bodenham NFM Project. As he had indicated at the beginning of the Meeting, there would be time at the end, after refreshments had been served, for members to outline their experiences and express their views on the events of the last two weeks. He therefore asked members to reserve any questions or points they wished to make until then, although these would be minuted under ‘Flooding’ in due course.</p> <p>12. Turning to Storm Dennis, the Chairman said that events had not followed the usual, hoped for, pattern where our local watercourses receive surface water from the Village and from the surrounding hills and get it away quickly into the River Lugg well before the River brings water from the Welsh hills to us. His interpretation of what had happened during Storm Dennis from 15-17 February was that neither the local area, nor the Welsh hills had fully recovered from previous rainfall events, the most recent being Storm Ciara on 9 February. Water levels had not fallen fully and the ground everywhere had been saturated.</p> <p>13. As a result, when Storm Dennis caused the Millcroft Brook to rise to 0.9m for the first time since before Christmas (20 December), which happened at 5 minutes past midnight on Sunday, 16 December, the Brook had already been beaten to the draw by the River Lugg. The River had risen above 2.60m at Butts Bridge at Leominster – the level at which ‘flooding is possible’ – about six hours earlier. Given that there is about a five hour lag in water levels at Leominster being reflected in levels here, this meant that precisely when water was trying to get away into the River down the Millcroft Brook, it was meeting the start of flood water in the River.</p> <p>14. Worse was to come because the Millcroft Brook did not stop as usual at just over 0.9m. For the first time since the telemetry system was installed in May 2010, the water level kept on rising to cause the third and highest (1.5m) alert to be issued at 3.50am on 16 December and then went on still further to peak at 1.935m at 4.25am. Based on past experience the Brook starts to give cause for concern when its water level reaches about 1.2m and the water is approaching the bottom of the parapet on the bridge in Brockington Road. It first reached that point at about 0.30am. However, there was then quite a delay before the real emergency occurred because, having risen further to 1.432m at 1.15am, the Brook fell back again to 1.164m by 2.45am, giving cause for optimism that the danger was over. It then started its final rise and by 3.50am a wave of water nearly a foot high was pouring over the parapet of the bridge and spreading North and South along Brockington Road.</p> <p>15. The culvert formed by the Brockington Road bridge is larger than those at Millcroft Farm and the Ketch Lane junction. However, as we have known since the hydrological report commissioned by Herefordshire Council in 2010, and as was</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>proved again on 16 February, it lacks the capacity to cope with severe flash floods. The same is true of the C1125 road bridge just upstream, which was overtopped in 2007 and again at around 3.50am on 16 February. Flood water from it flowed South along the C1125 to the GP Surgery, then West along Ash Grove Road, before turning South again down Brockington Road, at the end of which a blocked drain meant that it formed a large pool overflowing into the garden of one property and the garage of another.</p> <p>16. The overtopping of these two culverts was what caused much of the damage to 40 houses in July 2007. Fortunately, so far as we are aware, little or none was caused on this latest occasion, apart from water entering a few garages. The difference may be that in 2007 water backed up along the Brook and spilled over its banks because it could not get through the undersized Millcroft Farm culvert, whereas now the existence of the relief channel means that that culvert's lack of capacity is no longer a critical factor.</p> <p>17. By daylight on 16 February the Millcroft Brook was already flooding the C1121 (Millcroft Road) up to Millcroft Farm because, although flowing well, it was meeting the growing flood water from the River. The Brook had dropped to its normal level at the telemetry system by 3.15pm, but the River did not peak at Butts Bridge until 2.00am the following day (17 February) when at 3.76m it comfortably exceeded the previous highest level of 3.60m recorded in 2007. The Ketch Lane junction then remained flooded until the morning of 20 February, reaching a maximum depth of 32 inches on the C1121 and 37 inches at the South end of Ketch Lane (C1113) on the evening of 17 February. During the course of the flood there was the normal crop of cars whose drivers had ignored the 'Flood' and 'Road Closed' signs and had come to grief. Indeed, on 18 February there was a stranded car blocking each of the three roads into the junction preventing even tractors and other high wheel base vehicles from getting through.</p> <p>18. Although the Millcroft Brook affects the greatest number of properties in Bodenham Moor, significant flooding also occurred elsewhere in the Village. On 16 February there was the usual surface water on the C1125 at Eastfields Farm and the garden of Brook Cottage was submerged for a time. The stretch of the C1125 between Berrington Drive and England's Field was also flooded by both surface water and the Brook, with water entering at least one garage. At about 3.00am that morning water coming down Chapel Lane flooded across the C1125 into Orchard Close. Fortunately, someone in the Close was awake and, by diverting the water with sandbags from the Chapel Lane cage, and by keeping the drains clear, several residents prevented it from doing any major damage until, by about 6.00am, it had dispersed. Similarly, the owners of The Bungalow next to Saffrons Garage had to take emergency action in the early hours of 16 February to collect 60 sandbags from the central container to divert water from Riffins Brook and Bowley Lane around their property.</p> <p>19. Unfortunately, it was Bodenham West of the River which suffered worst. The Church was affected yet again and has now been unusable since October and, although pumps, sandbags and flood barriers allowed The Weir House and The Forge to escape, similar precautions did not prevent two neighbouring dwellings from being flooded. Finally, in Maund Bryan the recent work which the River Lugg IDB had done in clearing some of the local watercourses helped to prevent much of the runoff from the fields across the A417 from reaching the properties on Maund Common. Only one house on the Common was affected by the flood water and that was restricted to the outbuildings, although a number of other properties had water in their gardens.</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>20. <u>The Early Warning Telemetry System.</u></p> <p>a. The Chairman reported that during and immediately following Storm Dennis it became apparent that the telemetry system was not performing correctly in two respects. The first was that it was not updating the graph showing water levels every 10-15 minutes, as it should do after a rise in level triggers the first (0.5m) alarm. Instead it was only updating the graph the next time an alarm was issued, by which time the water level might have risen further, but not quite enough to set off a higher alarm, or it might have fallen considerably and then risen again.</p> <p>b. Being able to see how water levels are changing during an emergency – whether they are rising, peaking or falling and how fast this is happening – is important because it allows us to see the trends and react accordingly. Without updates between one alarm and the next means that we are working largely ‘blind’ and can only judge what best to do by visually monitoring the level at the Brockington Road bridge. This is less accurate and takes us away from other tasks. The Chairman said that he had raised the issue with Hydro-International on 19 February; they had reacted very promptly; and have assured us that the problem has been resolved.</p> <p>c. The second issue was that at about 7.50pm on Wednesday, 19 February the telemetry system issued a first (0.5m) alarm, almost immediately followed by a second (0.9m) alarm. Since normally the water level in the Brook takes 20 minutes or more to rise between these two alarms, this implied that something extraordinary – and potentially extraordinarily dangerous – was happening. The Chairman therefore immediately visited the telemetry system, only to find that the actual water level there was completely normal at about 0.2m. Furthermore, when he examined the data on these two alarms, he discovered that they were recorded as having been triggered at 6.50pm and 7.05pm - nearly an hour earlier than they were received.</p> <p>d. The Chairman reported these apparently false alarms, and a similar incident on 17 February when 0.5m and 0.9m alarms had been rapidly issued, but BFPG members visiting the Brockington Road bridge had found the water level to be normal. Hydro-International responded to his report very promptly, but could find no fault with the sensor. The apparent false alarm mystery therefore remains and we await the outcome of further investigation by the firm.</p> <p>21. <u>Flood-Related Advice.</u> The Chairman went on to remind members that there is much useful information relating to flooding on the Parish Website (both on the home page www.bodenhamparish.org.uk and in the BFPG section http://www.bodenhamparish.org.uk/bfpg-home.asp). In addition to advice on preparing for and dealing with flooding, there are details of the Herefordshire Council grants available to those who had suffered flood water inside their dwelling or business premises. There is also the prospect of a government grant of up to £5,000 to improve the flood resilience of properties, although the details of this have not yet been finalised. In addition, the Parish Website has a link to the form on which individuals can apply for financial support from the Herefordshire Community Foundation. He added that, if anybody felt that the details on the Website could be improved, or that they had additional information that might be added, he would be very happy to consider it.</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>22. <u>Issues Raised.</u></p> <p>a. During the discussion which followed at the end of the Meeting, various points were made which reflected the need for better mutual support in an emergency such as flooding. The Chairman stressed that the BFPG’s capacity to provide such support was limited because it is a small group and not many of its volunteers are now capable of heavy physical work. The Group would obviously do what it could to help, especially through its ‘buddy system’ and by providing early warning and coordination of effort, but it was essential that the community as a whole came together. He commended, in particular, the way that some residents in Orchard Close and others in the Conservation Area had joined forces to help each other out when Storm Dennis was at its height.</p> <p>b. A number of points were also raised which fell outside the BFPG’s remit and which will be passed on to the Parish Council, the main ones being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy duty drain jetting is required along Millcroft Road, Brockington Road, the C1125 (by Berrington Cottage and on The Moor) and in Chapel Lane/ Orchard Close. (Afternote. Some jetting has now been done, for example in Millcroft Road). • The drains in Orchard Close have long been, and continue to be, unsatisfactory. (Afternote. We have replied with an explanation of the remedial works which have been carried out in the Close over the years). • The drains outside 26, Orchard Closed have now been contaminated by sewage. This needs to be investigated and resolved. • There are problems on a number of ‘A’ and ‘C’ roads prone to flooding where temporary signs and barriers are ineffective because they are ignored and/or moved. The A417 at Maund Bryan was quoted as one example. It was suggested that consideration should be given to the installation of permanent, lockable barriers which, when necessary, can be swung across the road to close it and prevent vehicle access. • There is an urgent need for more residents to offer their help during flooding, especially those whose own houses are not at risk. 	
<u>ITEM 6 – EQUIPMENT</u>	
<p>23. <u>Sandbags.</u></p> <p>a. The Chairman reported that an initial calculation showed that, in addition to about 1,000 sandbags already distributed in properties around the Village, some 260 sandbags had been given out in the recent floods. One of the Group’s first tasks must therefore be to check our central stocks of sandbags in order to confirm how many we have left, and at the same time repair any which require attention. Depending on the outcome of this work, a decision might have to be taken about whether the remaining stock was sufficient for next Winter, or whether more need to be obtained and, if so, from where.</p> <p>b. He added that he could foresee a time when the stock of sandbags, which, by careful maintenance, had lasted us so well since 2008, would be exhausted. The Parish would then be faced with purchasing sandbags and this,</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>at around £2.00 per bag would be expensive. The Parish Council would then have to decide whether it is satisfied with the present system of controlling and distributing sandbags, or considered that further controls will be necessary . Although the need for decision might not be immediate, it was an issue about which he felt the Parish Council ought to be forewarned and he said that he would raise it with them.</p> <p>24. <u>Other Equipment.</u> The Chairman suggested that, with the annual maintenance programme starting in a couple of months' time, members might like to give some thought to what equipment the Group needed to purchase, repair or replace.</p> <p>25. <u>The BFPG Trailer.</u> The Chairman reminded members that the Group had a trailer in which to transport its equipment to working party sessions. This had been purchased shortly after the BFPG was first formed, but had never been used. Instead, it had remained at Millcroft Farm as a stationary store for the Group's rakes, shovels and other hand tools. Over the years the tyres and the doors forming the roof of the trailer had been replaced, but the latter were now beginning to deteriorate and would shortly need repairing again. Since he now had a new shed in which, for the time being, he was prepared to store the BFPG's tools, the Chairman suggested that the time had come to dispose of the trailer. He asked members to consider this and, if agreed, how best to do so.</p>	
<p><u>ITEM 7- EXTERNAL CONTACTS</u></p>	
<p>26. <u>Brimfield and Little Hereford Flood Group.</u> The Chairman reported that on 14 February he had received an email from the Brimfield and Little Hereford Flood Group asking what advice we give to local residents about obtaining sandbags. In his reply he had explained the BFPG system and our source of additional empty sandbags and put them in touch with Mrs Dhonau.</p> <p>27. <u>River Lugg Internal Drainage Board (IDB).</u> The Chairman also reported that during Storm Dennis Mr Les Harrison, the Area Engineer for the IDB, had rung to find out how the Village was faring, while Mr Charles Pudge, the Board's Chairman, had visited during a tour of the IDB area using a tractor to get through the floods around the County. These expressions of interest had been most welcome and the Chairman had been able to inform them that the relief channel and other works completed by the IDB in 2007-08 had been the major factor in keeping Bodenham Moor safe.</p> <p>28. <u>Herefordshire Council.</u></p> <p>a. Also very welcome had been several calls from our Ward Councillor, Cllr John Harrington, who had offered on each occasion to do what he could to help. During one of these the Secretary had explained that we were planning to hold an open meeting at which BFPG members and local residents could provide feedback on their recent experiences and put forward their ideas for improvements. Cllr Harrington indicated that Herefordshire Council might possibly hold a county-wide meeting of parish representatives to provide similar feedback and the Secretary suggested that, if so, Herefordshire Council might wish to use Mrs Mary Dhonau, Bodenham Parish Hall and the BFPG for it to repeat the success of the Herefordshire Council 'Know Your Flood Risk' day on 7 November 2011.</p> <p>b. On Monday morning (24 February) a team of about a dozen volunteers</p>	

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<p>from Herefordshire Council unexpectedly arrived at the Parish Hall as a Flooding Response and Resilience Team. The Chairman briefed them on which areas of the Parish had been most affected by flooding and the volunteers then dispersed in pairs around the area to speak to residents and hand out literature, cleaning materials and, where there had been damage, grants of up to £500 per household. This was a most welcome initiative by the Council, although it was slightly unfortunate that the BFPG were given no prior warning whatever since, with even a couple of hours' notice, the venture might have been rather better coordinated.</p>	
<p><u>ITEM 8 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></p> <p>29. <u>Date of the Next Meeting.</u> The next Meeting will be held at the Siward James Centre at 7.30pm on Tuesday, 31 March 2020.</p> <p>30. There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 8.30 pm.</p>	<p>All</p>

KA Mitcheson
Chairman

31 March 2020