



BODENHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP REPORT **(AUGUST 2020)**

SUMMARY OF THE PAST MONTH

1. Once again, despite some short periods of rain, the flood risk has continued to be very low indeed.

MONTHLY MEETING

2. The Group's monthly Meeting, due to have been held this evening (Tuesday, 28 July), has, of course, been cancelled because of the coronavirus Covid-19 restrictions and future meetings have also been cancelled until further notice.

EXTERNAL CONTACTS

3. **Hampton Bishop.**

a. On 7 July we received an email from Mr Chris O'Gorman, a resident of Hampton Bishop, who explained that, following last winter's floods, the Village had set up a flood mitigation group, but that unfortunately owing to the Covid 19 pandemic they had been forced to suspend activity until now. He asked us for any advice we might be able to give him about fundraising for equipment, services and flood protection measures. We provided him with the relevant details based on our own experience, but stressed that these might be of limited use since the problems Hampton Bishop is facing are almost certainly very different from ours. He thanked us for our information and noted that the Hampton Bishop group had been using Zoom conferencing very successfully and that it might be possible to have a virtual meeting with us, and this we agreed.

b. On 14 July we then received an email from Mr Simon Labbett, another member of the Hampton Bishop Group, who agreed that useful liaison would very much depend on a full understanding of our different situations. To aid this he kindly provided an excellent report on the flooding which Hampton Bishop had suffered in February, complete with an analysis on its causes and recommendations for action to be taken to mitigate the future risk.

c. This confirmed that, although the number of properties flooded (48) was not dissimilar to those affected in Bodenham in 2007 (40), the issues which Hampton Bishop are facing are very different to ours. The volumes of water converging on Hampton Bishop are enormous. Not only are they further downstream from us, but they also have the Wye, Lugg and Frome all converging within the Parish boundary. There are possible engineering solutions to the problems of reducing future flood risk, but these will take time to implement. However, the key challenge will be securing the

necessary funding for them and Mr Labbett is keen that Bodenham and the other communities in the Lugg valley should work together to achieve an outcome which will benefit all. We have said that we will, of course, do whatever we can to help.

4. **Llangarron.**

a. On 23 July we received an email from Mr Nigel Moore, the Vice-Chairman of Llangarron Parish Council, who explained that last winter Llangarron had suffered two significant episodes of flooding. These had resulted in damage to several properties and Mrs Beth Lewis, the Natural Flood Management (NFM) Project Officer at Herefordshire Council, had suggested to him that we might be able to provide him with advice on ways of alleviating the flood risk for the future. We said that we would be very happy to help in any way we can and a telephone meeting was set up for yesterday afternoon (27 July).

b. At this Mr Moore explained that the problem facing Llangarron was that the streams running through the Parish were not being properly maintained by the relevant landowners. The main challenge would be to persuade these individuals to carry out their riparian responsibilities. He asked how we had tackled this issue and we explained what we had done in the aftermath of the 2007 flood and went on to describe how the BFPG is constituted, how it is organised, the tasks it performs, how it is funded, and so on. Mr Moore expressed his thanks for our answering all his questions and we offered to provide any further help he might need following a Llangarron Parish Council meeting being held today (28 July).

CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESEARCH

5. **Birmingham University Flood Risk Project.** On 8 July we received an email from Mrs Beth Lewis at Herefordshire Council, drawing attention to a MSc dissertation research project being carried out by Ms Hannah Flusk at Birmingham University on ‘Changing flood risk, perceptions and responses with Natural Flood Management techniques in urban and rural areas of the UK’. She has chosen the Herefordshire River Wye and Lugg NFM Project as a case study and, as part of her research, she has created an on-line questionnaire, which she wanted residents in the various NFM catchments in Herefordshire to complete. This I duly did on 16 July.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

6. The Group’s AGM is normally held in August each year and at present is due to be held on Tuesday, 25 August. However, at the moment it seems likely that Covid-19 restrictions will prevent the Meeting taking place at Siward James. If so, we will suggest that it should be postponed to September. (Our Constitution does not specify when the AGM has to be held, only that an AGM should be held every year and that the Secretary should give all members 14 days’ notice of its time and place). Meanwhile, the Secretary has contacted all current Area Representatives and Sandbag Cage Keyholders and asked if they would be prepared to remain in post for a further year. Most have now replied and I should like to thank all those who have kindly said that they will be happy to do so. I would again remind you that **the posts of Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Operations Officer will also be open for re-election and I would ask any member who would like to take on any of these roles to please contact the Secretary as soon as possible, and by no later than 18 August.**

TREASURER'S REPORT

7. The balance in the Group's account at the end of June stood at £5,017.96, excluding the VAT refund of £5.99 due from the purchase of DPC. There has been no income or expenditure during July, so the balance remains unchanged.

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

8. On the evening of 25 July I 'walked the Brook' for a third time. Vegetation on the banks has obviously grown considerably over the past month, but, once again, anything that looked as though it might create a future problem, I cut back as I went. Some isolated patches of watercress and other weeds have appeared in the stream bed, but not enough to justify spraying.

9. Once again my assessment is that there is no need for us to attempt 'socially distanced' working parties on the Brook for the time being. However, a priority must be checking and repairing our main stocks of sandbags in preparation for the winter and I would suggest that we should plan on tackling that task in September.

FUTURE SOCIAL EVENTS

10. There is still no change to the programme, which, subject to all the usual caveats, remains that:

- a. **Annual Bonfire Party**. The Bonfire Party will be held on **Saturday, 10 October at 6.00pm at Millcroft Farm**.
- b. **Annual Quiz Night**. The Quiz Night is planned for **Friday, 27 November** in the Parish Hall.

K.A.M.