



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

SUMMARY OF THE PAST MONTH

1. Once again, with mainly hot and dry weather, the flood risk has continued to be very low indeed.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

2. The Group's AGM – its first face-to-face Meeting since February - was held at 7.00pm on Tuesday, 25 August in somewhat unusual conditions. Because of Covid-19 restrictions the venue was outside in the garden of Millcroft Farm with social distancing enforced, rather than indoors at the Siward James Centre as normal, and took place in the middle of Storm Francis with winds gusting to over 40mph. Fortunately the rain, which had been fairly constant throughout the day, eased just as the Meeting began, so the 16 members who attended did not get too wet.

3. As always, the annual election of Committee Members and Area Representatives took place. All the existing incumbents kindly expressed their willingness to continue in post for another year and were duly re-elected. However, Mr Mitcheson, the Chairman and Operations Manager, who had been in post for 9 years, and, Mrs Mitcheson, who had carried the roles of Secretary and Treasurer for 12 years, both said that, for family reasons, 2020-21 must be their last year in post – indeed, they might not be able to complete the full 12 months in office.

4. The Chairman expressed his warmest thanks to all the Area Representatives, the Sandbag Cage Key Holders, and members generally for all that they had done, and continued to do, for the Group, and especially for all the support that they had given to the Secretary and himself, not only over the past year, but throughout all the previous years during which they had been in post. They were both sad that they were having to step down, but circumstances change and the world moves on.

5. They urged members to end the present unsatisfactory situation where, for year after year, two individuals were expected to be responsible for all four committee posts and suggested that the Group should get together as soon as possible to find at least four members to share these responsibilities between them. The Chairman and Secretary would then do all they could to support the new incumbents while they 'found their feet'.

6. Following the AGM Cllr Tremain and Mr and Mrs House have expressed a willingness to try and get a new team together to ensure that the BFPG continues in being. They have analysed the tasks which need to be carried out and shown that these can be split down into six discrete roles, none of which are individually particularly onerous or time-consuming, especially since many actions only have to be carried out at one or two specific times of year. So far, members have come forward to fill four of the roles, so it now remains to recruit volunteers to fill the remaining two, Chairman and Secretary. The responsibilities for all the roles going forward are laid out in Annex A.

7. A general recruitment drive is being posted in the *Newsletter*, on *NextDoor*, and *Bodenham Watch*, as well as on the Parish Website and the parish *FaceBook* page. **If you would be willing to help in any way, please contact Debby House at debbyjhouse@icloud.com or on 01568-797305.**

SANDBAGS

8. At the AGM it was agreed that the most pressing issue facing the Group was the preparation and redeployment of sandbags in advance of the coming winter. Accordingly, a working party session was held on Saturday, 29 August to check and repair the remaining stock in the sandbag cages. In particular, the stockpiling of sandbags behind Hamwyn Joinery, which had been initiated 10 or more years ago, had never been very satisfactory and the owner, Mr Thurgood, had recently asked that they should be moved. The Group therefore transferred them to the sandbag cage at Siward James which was nearly empty.

9. The situation now is that, having handed out some 260 sandbags during last winter's floods, two of the four sandbag cages (one at the school carpark and the one at the Chapel Lane bus stop) are empty and the central reserve in the container behind the Parish Hall is badly depleted. In response to a request from the Chairman the Parish Council have approved the purchase of 250 filled sandbags, *i.e.* 5 pallets of 50, to restock the cages and container, together with 100 empty sandbags for future repairs.

10. Andrew Maxwell, who has kindly agreed to take on the role of Sandbag Officer, is making arrangements to have these delivered on the morning of 8 October and is organising a working party to receive them. They can then be put into the empty cages and the container immediately, both to prevent the sandbags deteriorating and to reduce the chances of pilfering. The latter has always been a concern, but now becomes much more of an issue bearing in mind that sandbags are no longer provided 'free' by Herefordshire Council, but have to be paid for out of the Parish's Precept.

WATERCOURSE MAINTENANCE

11. The coronavirus pandemic has made this a quite extraordinary year in which no maintenance work has been done – or, in fact, has needed to be done - on the watercourses, apart from some minor cutting back of vegetation, which the Chairman has carried out on his walks along the Millcroft Brook. However, occasional patches of brambles, watercress and mare's tail are beginning to take hold and so between 10.00am and 4.00pm on Sunday, 30 August the Chairman spot sprayed the Brook to limit further growth. Having done that, there should be no need for any working parties on the Brook this year.

FUTURE SOCIAL EVENTS

12. **Annual Bonfire Party**. Both because of Covid-19 restrictions and for the family reasons already mentioned, the Bonfire Party planned for Saturday, 10 October at Millcroft Farm has been cancelled. The bonfire itself is probable the largest ever and may be burnt on that day, but without the usual gathering over refreshments.

13. **Annual Quiz Night**. For the same reasons the Quiz Night planned for Friday, 27 November in the Parish Hall has also been cancelled.

14. **Annual Coffee Morning**. It has become traditional to hold the BFPG's Annual Coffee Morning in late January or early February and Mrs Davies, who has run the event since its inception in 2009, has raised an astounding £5,103.00 from it. She has, however, said that she would now like to stand down and, while we hope that it will be possible to hold next year's Coffee Morning, in view of the all the current Covid-19 and other uncertainties, no plans have yet been started for it.

K.A.M.

25/09/2020

Bodenham Flood Protection Group
Roles and Responsibilities (from September 2020)

It is proposed that, once the new committee is in place (with effect October 2020?), the following roles are required and their tasks and responsibilities within each role (which may differ to those currently undertaken), should be as follows:

Chairman (Vacant):

Deciding overall strategy and direction of the group
 Supporting the Operations Officer during emergencies as required
 Reporting to the monthly Parish Council meetings
 Advising the Parish Council on flood related matters (pertaining to the Village)
 (With the Treasurer) ensuring insurance cover for all group activities
 Acting as the point of contact for external agencies as necessary (such as Herefordshire Council, Environment Agency)
 (With the Treasurer) securing Parish Council approval for expenditure on sandbags, telemetry system, etc.
 Monitoring and amending the Constitution as required
 Maintaining the Group's Safety Policy
 Preparing meeting agendas
 Chairing the Group's meetings
 Approving and signing minutes

Operations Officer (Adrian House):

Taking charge (with Area Reps) in flood emergencies
 'Walking the brook'. deciding priorities for maintenance and preparing the schedule
 Leading the working parties
 Arranging storage, repair and replacement of equipment
 Arranging for annual spraying
 Overseeing telemetry system operation including alert levels and contact lists
 Liaison with Hydro-International/Isodaq
 (With the Treasurer), ensuring the SMS account is in credit
 Acting as BFPG Safety Officer (including maintaining the Health and Safety incident log)
 Carrying out risk assessments of all work and social activities

Secretary (Vacant):

Maintaining attendance records of all activities – working parties, meetings, social activities
 Maintenance of the group structure
 Maintenance of the Group's 'buddy' system to protect vulnerable residents
 Preparation of meeting agendas and minutes
 Maintenance of membership records and contact lists
 Acting as Data Protection Officer

Treasurer (Kathy Tremain):

Maintaining the BFPG account
 Producing the Treasurer's Report for the monthly meetings
 Dealing with cash and cheque receipts and expenditure

Liaising with the Parish Clerk over receipts/payments/VAT
Reconciling BFPG accounts with Parish accounts as required
Producing the annual statement for the AGM
(With the Ops Officer) ensuring the SMS account has credit
(With the Chairman) securing Parish Council approval for expenditure on sandbags, telemetry system, etc.
(With the Chairman) ensuring insurance cover for all group activities

Sandbag Officer (Andrew Maxwell):

Issuing sandbags as required and maintaining sandbag records
Liaising with suppliers for reordering of sandbags
(With the Ops Officer) agreeing on sandbag checks and replace/repair activities
Oiling sandbag containers' locks and updating notices as necessary

PR/Fundraising Officer (Debby House):

Acting as central co-ordinator in flood emergencies
Conducting PR and marketing for the Group such as recruitment drives, advertising social activities, asking for support, etc. as required
Preparing notes for the monthly Parish *Newsletter*
Maintaining the BFPG pages on the Parish Website
Maintaining a photographic record of all group activities
Arranging and organising the social and fundraising calendar
Chairing social events, assisting and thanking other organisers of fundraising/social events as necessary