



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

SUMMARY OF THE PAST MONTH

1. March has been a complete contrast to the five previous months. Once our sixth storm since October – Storm Jorge – had passed, the weather has gradually improved until we are now enjoying the sunshine of Spring and the flood risk has reduced accordingly.

MONTHLY MEETING

2. The Group's March Meeting was due to have been held on Tuesday, 31 March 2020, but, because of the growing threat of coronavirus Covid-19, the decision was taken on 18 March to cancel it and subsequent meetings until further notice.

FLOODING

3. Flood-Related Advice.

a. Although flooding has now been overtaken in the news by the current pandemic, flooding has not gone away. There are two properties in the Village whose owners are now dealing with the aftermath of flood water entering their homes and we are in contact with them for progress reports on their situation. Can I remind you that there is much useful information relating to flooding on the Parish Website (on the home page www.bodenhamparish.org.uk as well as in the BFPG section <http://www.bodenhamparish.org.uk/bfpg-home.asp>).

b. In addition to advice on preparing for and dealing with flooding, there are details of the Herefordshire Council grants available to those who have suffered flood water inside their dwelling or business premises. The Parish Website also has a link to the form on which individuals can apply for financial support from the Herefordshire Community Foundation.

c. Meanwhile, the Secretary has been in touch with Herefordshire Council about 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 particular, she has asked for clarification over whether the grant will apply to properties which did not flood simply because the owners had taken action to prevent water entering their property by using sandbags. In addition, she has pointed out that this year has seen more flooding than in 2007 and many properties which had previously not flooded have come close to doing so. She has asked, therefore, whether this grant will be available to those who need flood protection to assist with either upgrading or otherwise improving their existing defences.

4. **Sandbags.**

a. During the recent storms we gave out to households in the Village some 260 sandbags from the sandbag cages and many of these are unlikely to be returned in a re-usable form following their deployment. We have therefore been in touch with the Parish Council to ask for funding to replace them. The Parish Council have asked us to submit a request and our intention is to ask for 250 sandbags, that is 5 pallets of 50, to restock the four cages. Once the purchase has been authorised, the Secretary will contact Radbournes in Hereford and, Covid-19 permitting, arrange a mutually convenient time in April to tie in with a working party so that the new sandbags can be put immediately into the cages.

b. **Meanwhile, with everyone confined to their own homes for the next few weeks and perhaps wondering how they are going to occupy their time, now might be a good opportunity to check and repair your sandbags before the next flood! (Flooding is not confined to the Winter months – the flood of 2007 which damaged 40 houses in Bodenham Moor happened on 20 July at the height of the Summer). We have a few empty sandbags still in stock, so, if you need some for repairs, please let us know and we will devise some way of getting them to you.**

5. **Other Equipment.** Subject to the coronavirus situation improving, we would hope to start the annual maintenance programme in a couple of months' time. **Please therefore give some thought to what equipment the Group needs to purchase, repair or replace and let us have your thoughts on this.**

6. **The BFPG Trailer.** As I mentioned at the last Meeting, the Group owns a trailer which was purchased shortly after the BFPG was first formed with the idea that it could be used to transport equipment to working party sessions. This, however, has never happened and, instead, the trailer has 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 have been replaced, but the latter are now beginning to deteriorate and will shortly need repairing again. Since, we can now store the BFPG's tools elsewhere temporarily, the time has perhaps now come to dispose of the trailer. **I should be grateful if you would consider this proposal and email me with any suggestions.**

TREASURER'S REPORT

7. The balance at the end of February stood at £5,072.16.

8. There have been two items of income in March. The first has been a refund of £8.00 from the Parish Hall for an overcharge on the hire for the Quiz Night last November and the other was a generous donation of £15.00 to the Group. The only item of expenditure has been £31.50 for the servicing of the BFPG's petrol water pump, for which we would like to have retrospective approval. (When houses were flooding in the Conservation Area and needed additional pumps, we tried unsuccessfully to start it and obviously had to take prompt action to get it working again).

9. The balance at the end of March now stands at £5,063.66, excluding the outstanding VAT refund of £5.99 from the purchase of DPC.

EXTERNAL CONTACTS

10. **Wellington Parish.** As previously reported, two residents from Wellington, Mr Graham Webb and Mr John Major, attended our February Meeting and we have subsequently been in correspondence with Mr Webb and with the Chairman of Wellington Parish Council, Cllr Jenni Gowan, over their plans to set up a flood action group. Mr and Mrs Webb also visited Millcroft

Farm on Friday, 13 March and we discussed with them the issues Bodenham faced after the 2007 floods and showed them what had been done since then to try and prevent a recurrence.

11. **Eardisland Parish Council.** On Sunday, 8 March we received an email from the Parish Clerk of Eardisland Parish Council to say that they were planning to set up a flood resilience group. A meeting with the Parish Clerk and the Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council to discuss flooding issues was planned for Wednesday, 25 March at Millcroft Farm, but this has had to be postponed because of the Covid-19 situation.

12. **Walford Village.** Also on Sunday, 8 March Mr Ian Urry of Walford contacted us to say that the Village had decided to form a flood action group which would meet for the first time on 12 March. He asked for a chance to discuss the problems faced by Walford and this meeting took place at Millcroft Farm on 9 March when we explained the issues faced by Bodenham after the 2007 floods and showed him what had been done to try and protect the properties in future. We also assisted by sending him copies of BFPG documents to help with the setting up of his Group and we have subsequently heard the good news that significant progress is being made. At their inaugural meeting thirty Leintwardine and Walford residents met to discuss their local problems and agreed to form two groups and seek adoption by their respective parish councils. They also agreed to share information and co-operate on a number of projects, starting with a joint a walk around Leintwardine to map all the issues. They have already been offered the free services of a local farmer for extracting fallen trees out of the River Teme.

13. **The Border Group of Parishes.** The Border Group of Parish Councils includes Leintwardine and Walford and the Group's Parish Clerk contacted the Secretary and asked for a copy of the BFPG's Constitution which we have sent to her.

14. **Parish Website.** In the first half of March the Parish Website (www.bodenhamparish.org.uk) experienced a peak in the number of users accessing it, particularly new users (941 out of a total of 1,033) and especially users looking at the BFPG section of the Website.

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

15. Normally at this time of year we would be thinking about starting the working party 'season', with sessions for an hour every alternate Friday evening first to check and repair sandbags and then to clear our local watercourses. Clearly the coronavirus Covid-19 situation makes such a start impossible at the moment and we shall have to keep the schedule under review. Meanwhile, all is not lost. Although, following our meeting with Mr Joel Hockenhull, Balfour Beatty's Senior Drainage Engineer, on 22 February 2019, we had had some hope that Balfour Beatty would put a system in place for the clearance of winter debris from the Ketch Lane culverts, this has not materialised. Peter Jones and I therefore put on our waders on Sunday, 8 March and cleared the culverts ourselves. In addition, even with social-distancing and other restrictions in place, it may be possible for me to commence spraying the Millcroft Brook when there is any growth worth spraying – it is, after all, an isolated task, important for the safety of Bodenham Moor and good exercise.

FUTURE SOCIAL EVENTS.

16. Owing to the uncertainty over how long the present emergency may continue, our next social event, the Annual Barbecue, may have to be cancelled, or at least postponed. However, the present situation is that:

- a. **Annual Barbecue.** 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. The Secretary will send out more details nearer the time.

b. **Annual Bonfire Party**. All being well, the Bonfire Party will be held **Saturday, 10 October at 6.00pm at Millcroft Farm** and, again, details will be sent out by the Secretary nearer the date.

c. **Annual Quiz Night**. The Quiz Night is planned for **Friday, 27 November** in the Parish Hall. Mr and Mrs Moule have very kindly agreed to act as Quiz Masters again and Mrs Bowden has generously said that she will organise the event.

K.A.M.