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**Minutes of the Bluntisham Parish Council Meeting
Monday 7th December 2015 at 8pm in The Village Hall, Mill Lane,
Bluntisham**

Present: Chairman: Mrs Margaret Lumb, Mr Frank Hudson, Mrs Philippa Hope, Mrs Anne Parsons, Mr Mark Berg, Mr Ian Shepherd, Mr Alan Moules, Mr Mike Francis, Mr Rob Gore, Mrs Tracey Davidson (Clerk),

Also present: 12 members of the public

	<p>Open Forum: The Chairman formally welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologised for having not formally introduced herself at the last meeting. She started the open forum and welcomed any questions on agenda items or suggestions for future agenda items.</p> <p>Mrs Joan Gutteridge asked several questions around the budget and accounts. Mr Rob Gore answered all questions and confirmed that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no salary increases have been approved for any staff and the increase in the budget lines for 2016/17 is based on the current years spend. • New budget lines have been added to make it easier to review and more transparent. • CIL money for this financial year is in miscellaneous income and allocated to the play park project. • A full finance report will be shared during the meeting. <p>Mrs Sue Everest wanted to reassure the committee that item 2266, tree application in Station Road, is purely to manage the Oak Tree and not to remove it. The tree has historical interest to the village.</p> <p>Mr Steve Highland advised he had received correspondence from Accent Nene who confirmed they do not want to pursue affordable housing on the land in Station Road. HDC have asked if he would be interested in another housing association buying the land for affordable housing. He has finished the fence to the car park and put signs up advising it is staff parking only and planted the replacement tree. He has met with Highways to discuss the illegally parked vehicles on the forecourt and they have confirmed nothing can be done as any changes to kerbing etc are likely to result with HGV's parking in the road, however, he is getting quotes for repainting the white and yellow lines on the forecourt.</p> <p>The meeting started at 20:08.</p>	
2254	Dispensation Forms received and decisions given – Nothing to report	
2255	Declarations of interest for items on the agenda – Mr Ian Shepherd affordable housing.	
2256	Apologies for absence – Cllr Robin Carter, Cllr Gary James, Cllr Kathy Searle	
2257	Minutes of the Parish Council meeting dated 2nd November 2015 to be approved and signed –The Chairman signed the minutes and all approved. (<i>Proposed Mr Mark Berg seconded Mr Frank Hudson. All agreed</i>)	
2258	Matters arising from previous minutes – no matters arising.	
2259	Village maintenance:	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees – Sumerling Way. Mr Alan Moules met with Bridget Halford (BH) from HDC, Frank Hudson &, Margaret Lumb from the PC and Mr John Morgan, Mr Terry Guy and Mrs Wakeham on the 24 November to look at the trees at the back of Sumerling Way. The reports from this meeting were shared with all attendees and the PC. The main concerns are listed below: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The large oak tree back of number 4 was confirmed not to be a problem for about 30 years by BH. 2. The smaller trees in the hedgerow which have been butchered over the years are not adding any value and it was recommended by BH to be removed. 3. The hedge is well maintained and access is sufficient at the rear of the hedge for residents to access their fences. BH advised that annual trimming of the hedge is adequate. 4. The ivy growing up the tree needs to be removed but can be done by anyone at their leisure. <p>Mrs Philippa Hope raised concerns that if the PC allow the removal of the Oak Tree then a precedent is being set for others in the village to demand the removal of other PC trees throughout the village. Mr Mark Berg suggested removing the pollarded trees but to leave the oak tree. Mr Mike Francis also suggested removing the pollarded trees but to save the oak, as it is on the north side and not likely to cause an issue for 30 + years. The parish council agreed to the recommendations made by BH and the clerk is to make arrangements for the pollarded trees to be removed and a maintenance programme be put in place for the Oak Tree. <i>(Mr Rob Gore proposed, Mr Mark Berg seconded. All in favour.)</i></p> • New Mower – the clerk shared a summary report of costs for going out to tender for village grass cutting, to repair the mower and retain in house and to purchase a new mower and continue in house maintenance. As the clerk hadn't been able to get all 3 quotes before this meeting it was agreed to defer this item until more detail can be obtained. Mr Mark Berg is to research new mowers with Mr Peter Searle and report back to the clerk. It was agreed to bring this back to the February meeting for a decision to be made. The clerk will advise the companies who have already quoted of the delay. <i>(Proposed Mr Rob Gore, seconded Mr Frank Hudson. All agreed.)</i> 	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk/Mark Berg</p>
2260	<p>Bluntisham Community Fund (BCF) – Mrs Philippa Hope sent detailed questions on the letter received from the BCF prior to the meeting. Mr Jonathan Clarke gave a brief summary on the BCF. The BCF was set up in 2010 as new parish council members wanted to get involved in community events to raise money and didn't want to lose the income raised in the parish council budget. As the PC is unable to make donations to charities and good causes it was decided to set up the charity for the community who could apply for funding for their projects.</p> <p>Events included Royal wedding gala & craft fairs. So far the BCF has issued grants to the allotment association for a toilet & St Helens School for a story telling chair. The BCF are looking to re-establish the link between the PC.</p> <p>Mrs Philippa Hope referred to the BCF's letter regarding income raised since November 2014 which had been retained by the PC from fundraising events. The only event since this date was the WW2 community event, which wasn't organised by the PC but the WW2 committee. It had been agreed that any profit made would be put towards a community marquee for future events. The income from the kerbside recycling collection in March 2015 was retained by the PC.</p>	

	<p>In the letter the BCF refer to funding good causes on behalf of the parish council, however in the terms of reference it make no reference to consultation with the PC. Mrs Philippa Hope asked what other applications have been received to date? Bluntisham Parish Council wrote to the BCF in September asking for a grant of £200 to help fund the community marquee, the BCF confirmed that they were waiting for this meeting before replying, the PC have since raised the funds for the community marquee via the proceeds from the Christmas Fayre and the request is now obsolete.</p> <p>Finally in the terms of reference for the BCF it refers to fundraising, does the BCF have any plans to raise funds in the future?</p> <p>Mr Jonathan Clarke advised that the BCF would be interested in helping with joint fundraising events but to raise funds for the village. The BCF only has 5 trustees and despite advertising for more in the newsletter no-one has come forwards. Mrs Philippa Hope, Mr Ian Shepherd & Mr Mark Berg all volunteered to be trustees and represent the PC on the BCF, they need to formally write to the BCF to express their interest. The PC will then formally report on the discussions at the BCF meetings as and when they take place.</p>	Philippa Hope/Ian Shepherd/Mark Berg
2261	<p>FY2015/16 Accounts – to end November 2015</p> <p>Mr Rob Gore advised that the misc income is high due to closure of Lloyds bank account and the accounts have to show money going in and out. The salary sub-total is slightly under budget. The administration is slightly over budget due to the new councillor training, election costs and parish council payments are £4463 over budget year to date. However, the forecast receipts will be £1040 higher than expenditure by year end. The Village Hall income has increased by £6k, expenditure has been more than £4600. This is mainly due to unexpected maintenance costs for the boiler repairs and holiday cover for the staff. The forecast is for the village hall accounts, is that receipts will exceed expenditure by £1499 by year end.</p> <p>Total receipts £3572.45 & total expenditure £33085.28. Closing bank balances: Lloyds 0933915 - £42520.22 Lloyds 0934024 - £0.00 This account is now closed Cambs building society - £56639.96 (Proposed Mrs Philippa Hope, Seconded Mr Mike Francis. All agreed.) <i>Annex 1</i></p>	
2262	<p>Accounts for payment and sign cheques for November payments –Mrs Philippa Hope and Mr Rob Gore signed the cheques and no concerns with the payments for the month. (Proposed Mrs Philippa Hope seconded Mr Rob Gore. All agreed.)</p>	
2263	<p>Cash Book Publication – a request at the finance meeting on the 9th November to share the cash book was made. The clerk advised that legally the PC doesn't have to share this. Mr Rob Gore added the PC has nothing to hide and therefore it would be good practice to share. It was agreed that this should be made a public document on the website. (Proposed Mr Ian Shepherd, seconded Mr Mark Berg. All agreed.)</p>	Clerk
2264	<p>Approve Budget 2016/17 & Precept – The Finance committee presented their proposed budget which was discussed in depth at their meeting on the 9th November. The proposal is not to increase the precept for 2016/17 and retain it as £92827.00. Additional lines have been included in the budget to make it more transparent. Funds have been allocated for all earmarked reserves including the statutory reserve (3-6mths payments), £900 LHI bids, £2700 VH contingency Maintenance, £1500 set up costs pension, £6000 Station Road footpath, £5900 outdoor gym & play park making a total of £57,000 for earmarked reserves. A transfer of £360.04 from the Lloyds account into the Cambs building society account is needed to ensure all earmarked reserves are covered by the balance in the CBS account</p>	Clerk

	<p>At the finance meeting a suggestion to monitor the % of money being spent on admin costs v village maintenance was made.</p> <p>Mr Mike Francis asked about Timebanking and where the money would come from if this was approved. Mr Rob Gore confirmed there is enough surplus should the PC decide to go ahead with this scheme. <i>(Proposed Mrs Philippa Hope, Seconded Mr Alan Moules. All agreed.)</i></p>	
2265	<p>County Council & District Council reports – Steve Criswell – CCC are facing a difficult budget setting project as £43 million has to be saved for 2016/17. Front line services will be cut as there is now no alternative. CCC are consulting with the public at the moment on the services to be reduced. At present 80% of the county’s budget is spent on adult social care, with 15% on Highways and the remainder on library & other services. Cllr Steve Criswell advised that gritting of highways may be reduced, at present only 1/3rd of the counties roads are gritted, however, CCC will be transparent with the roads which will and won’t be gritted.</p> <p>Mr Rob Gore questioned the council’s reserves and what % these are. Cllr Steve Criswell advised these can’t be touched. The final decision on the services to be cut won’t be made until February 2016.</p> <p>Mrs Joan Gutteridge asked if the CCC precept is likely to be increased, this can’t be confirmed until the budget is set. She also asked how rigorous the application process is for issuing care packages, Cllr Steve Criswell couldn’t comment on this.</p> <p>Mrs Philippa Hope asked if the cycle path is still on track for Spring 2016. Cllr Steve Criswell confirmed this is still the information he has and any changes he will update the PC.</p> <p>Robin Carter – was unable to attend the meeting but advised that HDC are currently issuing stickers with all the bank holiday dates and other information. HDC are also continuing with their appeal for people who want a 140 litre bin to replace their 240 litre. Please contact HDC contact centre on 01480 388388 to request this. These requests are currently taking 4-6 weeks.</p> <p>Mike Francis – advised that HDC are able to produce a balanced budget for this year but the years ahead are likely to be a different story. HDC continue to look at more efficient ways of working across the council. Serious effort goes into Council Tax and Housing Benefit fraud prevention by HDC with significant amounts being recovered. HDC ask for people to phone and report any suspicions as often one fraudulent claim leads to another with another agency.</p>	
2266	<p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable Housing update – the clerk advised that correspondence from HDC Frank Mastrandrea confirmed that Accent Nene are no longer interested in developing sites in Bluntisham. HDC will continue to investigate other options with other social housing developers. • 15/02081/TREE – Mr Mark Berg visited the site to look at the tree and recommended that the work be carried out to preserve the Oak Tree. <i>(Proposed Mr Mark Berg, seconded Mr Frank Hudson. All agreed.)</i> 	
2267	<p>Health & Safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog Fouling – Mrs Philippa Hope continues to walk Meeting Walk and spray when dog fouling is identified, however, this isn’t as bad as previously 	Philippa Hope/Mark Berg/Ian

	<p>although the leaves are likely to be hiding a lot of evidence. Mr Alan Moules advised the dog walk is getting worse. Mr Mark Berg & Mr Ian Shepherd volunteered to help with the monitoring of the dog walk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter Gritting – the clerk read out the information received from CCC which confirmed that on reading the 2015/16 Community Gritting Training Pack means you are now trained to grit the designated areas. CCC will provide the spreader & salt but not coats and boots. The PC are appealing for willing volunteers within the village to help with this so a rota can be put in place before the bad weather arrives. Any willing volunteer is to contact the clerk for more information. • Play park update – Mrs Philippa Hope advised that the WREN application has to be re-submitted as further detail is required. This will delay the decision, however, they were positive with their response. The TESCO application had to be re-submitted as they will only fund whole projects and not part of a larger project. The outdoor gym has been put forward to be funded by TESCO. <p><i>Post meeting note: Grantscape have confirmed Bluntisham Parish Council have not been successful with their bid. The clerk has asked for feedback as to why this application was rejected.</i></p>	Shepherd/Alan Moules
2268	<p>Timebanking – Mr Rob Gore thanked Cllr Steve Criswell for arranging to meet with Colne & Earith PC and Sheena the nurse for both villages. The meeting was very positive.</p> <p>Somersham set up a timebank 4 years ago and is now very successful with the delivery of services and also getting other village groups talking to each other. The timebank has an overall community benefit too. In brief the scheme is members only who exchange different services using a bank system. This gives you a wider range of skill sets within the group. It is clear that in order to make it work you have to have a paid coordinator to coordinate the needs and encourage the members. They are the key person to a successful timebank. It is difficult to identify the need until it is in place and we won't know if it's needed until we try it.</p> <p>The costs to set up are as follows: Initial IT for coordinator - approx £1400 Salary ongoing £10800 Expenses ongoing £800</p> <p>Cllr Steve Criswell advised a grant could be available for the IT costs but this would have to be applied for before 24 December 2015.</p> <p>Earith PC are keen to pursue a joint project with Bluntisham and Colne (still to confirm) and the idea is to share the expense with Bluntisham being the lead parish. An approximate cost of £6,000 per annum would need to be paid by Bluntisham Parish Council and a 2 year scheme is being proposed. Earith PC asked if it could be promoted as a Community Need Network rather than a timebank.</p> <p>Questions were raised around who would provide the Line Management for the coordinator, where they would be located, who would monitor the fairness of the role being split between the parishes. Mrs Philippa Hope asked about consultation with parishioners for the need for the scheme. Cllr Steve Criswell advised that other timebank coordinators have said consulting with the public is the last thing you should do as people don't come forward as wanting help. Mrs Anne Parsons asked how many people are registered in the timebank in Somersham. Cllr Steve Criswell</p>	

	<p>confirmed approximately 150 people are registered to use the Somersham timebank. Mrs Philippa Hope asked what the common requests for services are within the time bank. Cllr Steve Criswell didn't know the answer.</p> <p>A vote was taken for going ahead with the timebank with 5 against and 4 in favour making the final decision a rejection at this stage. It was agreed to have a working group to take this forward with Mrs Philippa Hope and Mr Rob Gore to answer some of the concerns raised and how the practical side of the coordinator role will operate.</p>	Philippa Hope/Rob Gore
2269	<p>LHI Bid – Item 2195 7th September 2015 the PC approved the bid for the halos at the school crossing and a PC contribution of £500. Since then the PC has received advice that a contribution of £900 is likely to increase the success of the application, therefore Mr Rob Gore asked for approval for the additional £400, which has been allocated in the 2016/17 budget.</p> <p><i>(Proposed Mr Ian Shepherd, seconded Mr Mark Berg. All agreed.)</i></p>	
2270	<p>Mid Term Audit – the clerk has suggested for transparency that the PC has a mid term audit. The cost of this is £75 plus mileage.</p> <p><i>(Proposed Mrs Philippa Hope, seconded Mr Rob Gore. All agreed.)</i></p>	Clerk
2271	<p>Invite SLCC/CAPALC to attend PC Meeting – the clerk has suggested for transparency and to identify any potential training needs that she invite one or both of these groups to attend future parish council meetings.</p> <p><i>(Proposed Mr Mark Berg, seconded Mr Ian Shepherd. All agreed.)</i></p>	Clerk
2272	<p>Committee updates:</p> <p>a) HMC Update – meeting 14th December, all welcome.</p> <p>b) Finance Update – following the finance meeting on the 9th November queries have been answered fully in writing. Those who raised the queries were happy with the responses given and no further action was needed.</p> <p>c) Allotments update – a new stop cock is needed as the old one can't be switched off and is causing leaks.</p> <p>Post meeting note: Cambs water have replaced this at no cost to the PC</p> <p>d) Crime – regular emails are circulated highlighting all crimes. New initiative has been set up to reduce handbag and purse thefts, small cow bells are available to attach to these items. Contact Mrs Margaret Lumb if you would like these.</p> <p>Highway Warden update – a village walkabout took place today (7th December) no issues raised. Tree Preservation Orders will no longer be issued for trees on private land, unless they are in a conservation area. Further work in Wood End is being carried out for flood prevention.</p> <p>Road safety – Upwood PC have requested a meeting with the MP. Bluntisham School governor wants speedwatch but they are not interested in setting it up.</p> <p>HCV – no meeting.</p> <p>Envar – have had a generator worth £50,000 stolen recently. The new equipment installed is working well.</p>	
2273	<p>Community Assets – Mrs Philippa Hope questioned Cllr Steve Criswell on the community asset application process. It was confirmed that unless the parish are interested in buying or plan on operating the asset, it can't be registered as a community asset. The PC do not currently have the resources to do either, so regretfully are unable to register either of the two pubs in the village.</p>	
2274	<p>Riparian Ownership– Flood prevention – the clerk is still working on producing a full scale map identifying land owners of each ditch and will share as soon as this is completed.</p>	Clerk
2275	<p>Old Telephone Box – <i>this item was deferred until January 2016 meeting.</i></p>	

