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Minutes of the Bluntisham Parish Council Meeting

Monday 7th March 2016 at 8pm in The Village Hall, Mill Lane, Bluntisham

Present: Chairman: Mrs Margaret Lumb, Mr Frank Hudson, Mrs Anne Parsons, Mr Mike Francis (arrived at 21.00), Mr Gary James, Mrs Kathy Searle, Mr Rob Gore, Mrs Tracey Davidson (Clerk),

Also present: 10 x members of the public

Open Forum: - The Chairman welcomed all Councillors and members of the public. The clerk welcomed Mr Lionel Thatcher (SLCC) and Jo Philpott (HACT). The Chairman then opened the open forum:

Mr Terry Guy - 6 Sumerling Way raised the trees. He started by advising it wasn't his intention to challenge decisions made by the PC, however, he would like to give a summary of the way in which the Sumerling Way trees had been managed by the PC. He stated that he originally raised this on 13 June 2014 as the trees hadn't been cut prior to this date nor were included on any schedule for 2014. They were not cut in 2015 either hence the correspondence to the PC. A meeting was arranged with Mr Frank Hudson on 24 October 2015 in which it was advised that a detailed report would be available following the meeting. The trees were discussed at the PC meeting on 2.11.15 and Mrs Kathy Searle advised that some of the trees were over 30 years old. Mr Terry Guy passed round photos of his property 18 years ago showing the trees as young saplings. The PC agreed during this meeting that they would contact HDC tree officer to arrange an appointment to come out on site to assess the trees. Mr Guy wanted it noting that at the November PC meeting both him and Mr Morgan left before the meeting closed, but no reference was made to this in the minutes.

The meeting with HDC was scheduled for 24.11.15. Bridget Halford admitted that she was not an expert but had worked for HDC as their Tree Warden Coordinator for a number of years. HDC no longer offer specialist advice due to the lack of staff in the tree team. A report from this meeting was shared with all.

Mr Guy made reference to several trees having been planted by the PC over the years, however, they didn't put a maintenance schedule in at the same time as planting the trees.

Post meeting note: a full synopsis of the points raised can be viewed as appendix 2 to these minutes.

Mr John Morgan – 5 Sumerling Way raised 3 questions:

1. The Minutes of the November PC meeting begin *“the Chairman started the open forum by advising that recording of any meeting, if agreed by the council, is only allowed if the clerk has been informed before the meeting commences. “*

This statement in no way reflects the rudeness of the Chairman that evening, nor is it accurate. Following my subsequent complaint to the Monitoring Officer at HDC, councillors will now be aware of the advice received from HDC Legal which states:

The openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 means that anyone can now record Parish Council meetings (and other councils) by whatever means they wish by law. Parish Councils are required to allow members of the public to film or audio record the proceedings. No prior permission is required.

Will the Chair please confirm that the statement in the November 2015 minutes will be withdrawn and replaced with the HDC advice so that all Bluntisham residents are fully aware? The Chair confirmed that minutes which had been approved can't be changed,

however, these minutes will confirm the statement is correct.
Will the Chair also confirm that PC standing orders have been updated to incorporate the new provisions in the 1960 Act which came into effect in August 2014? The Chair confirmed this had been actioned.

2. My (and neighbours) ongoing dispute with the Council regarding trees to the rear of our properties has highlighted inconsistencies in the council minutes. Inaccurate statements made by councillors during meetings have not been minuted and when later referred to have been denied. To avoid this problem of selective memory on the part of councillors HDC further advises that:

It is appropriate for questions from the public to be minuted along with responses to the same, as this forms part of the meeting it should be minuted.

Will the Chair please confirm that these questions, and future parishioners' questions, will be appended to the council minutes and ensure that any council comments or actions taken, both in open forum or during the meeting, are accurately recorded for residents to see? The Chair confirmed this and these questions form part of these minutes.

3. Lastly regarding agenda item 2339 – thank you for eventually removing the trees this afternoon. However, it is disappointing that this genuine concern on our part turned into such an acrimonious dispute, causing the Chair to email the Clerk:

“We thought he would be vocal again. Actually it is not a priority to take the trees out until now & I think he is still out to cause trouble as he did not get the result he wanted from his complaint! I doubt we will ever get in his good books but we will have to shrug him off”

Please can the Chair confirm if it is now council policy that all residents who are perceived difficult should be “shrugged off” or did this only apply to me? The Chair advised this was a mistake and has apologised for this.

Mrs Joan Gutteridge – raised a question on the accounts, what does the figure £29.17 for the full year forecast for churchyard maintenance mean and has money been spent from the churchyard maintenance budget? Mr Rob Gore confirmed nothing had been spent on this budget, however, the forecast amount represented the amount of the full year budget remaining for the final month of the year, although there are no plans to spend any in March 2016. Mrs Gutteridge asked the clerk if she was going to share where all the bins are located in the village under agenda item 2337. The clerk advised she had the detail to share if anyone wanted to see it.

Clerk

Mrs Janet Gedye asked if the tyre tracks made along the dog walk following cutting the trees down to the rear of Sumerling Way would be filled as they could be a H&S hazard. The clerk is to investigate.

Mrs Sue Everest raised concerns with parking from Walnut Tree Close towards the junction and beyond as this is a dangerous corner and cars are parking all the way along at times. The Chair advised that when this had been raised previously both the Police and Highways Officers have stated that there is nothing that can be done, but it is a natural way of slowing down the traffic. The clerk advised that there is an action on the parish plan to investigate a one way option from the junction to Wood End, this is an action for Mr Mark Berg to investigate further.

Mark Berg

Mrs Eve Smith advised she was disappointed with the decision not to pursue TimeBanking when one operates well in Somersham. Mr Rob Gore advised that he was looking at other options to try and get something similar started in the village and he is continuing to work with Cllr Steve Criswell on this. The Chair advised that the parish council can't formally review it again for a 6 month period.

	Mr Terry Guy & Mr John Morgan left the meeting. The Meeting started at 8.20pm	
2327	Dispensation Forms received and decisions given – Nothing to report	
2328	Declarations of interest for items on the agenda – Mrs Margaret Lumb item 2340 – 16/00232/NMA 20B Station Road. Mr Rob Gore item 2340 – 16/00118/HHFUL 3 Blacksmiths End.	
2329	Apologies for absence –Mrs Philippa Hope, Mr Alan Moules, Mr Mark Berg, Mr Ian Shepherd, Mr Mike Francis will be late.	
2330	Huntingdonshire Association for Community Transport (HACT) – Jo Philpott explained what HACT can offer residents of Bluntisham and left leaflets for promoting the scheme. HACT isn't just for those people with a concessionary bus pass but anyone can pay to be a member and use the scheme for a small fee. Day trips and outings are also available. The buses all have 15 seats and have hydraulic lifts making it easy for wheelchair access in and out. They also offer group hire per bus for local groups. For more details visit www.hact-cambs.co.uk or www.facebook.com/hact.transport or call 01480 411114.	
2331	Minutes of the Parish Council meeting dated 1st February 2016 to be approved and signed –The Chairman signed the minutes and all approved. (<i>Proposed Mr Frank Hudson seconded Mrs Anne Parsons. All agreed</i>)	
2332	Matters arising from previous minutes – no matters arising.	
2333	FY2015/16 Accounts – to end February 2016 Mr Rob Gore went through the accounts and advised there was no unplanned expenditure for the month. Total receipts £2803.10 & total expenditure £4096.18. Closing bank balances: Lloyds 0933915 £38074.65 Cambs Building Society - £56639.96 Lloyds 0934024 - £0.00 this account is now closed. (<i>Proposed Mrs Kathy Searle, Seconded Mr Frank Hudson. All agreed.</i>) Annex 1	
2334	Accounts for payment and sign cheques for February payments –Mr Rob Gore and Mr Gary James signed the cheques and no concerns with the payments for the month were raised. (<i>Proposed Mr Rob Gore seconded Mr Gary James. All agreed.</i>)	
2335	County Council & District Council reports – Cllr Steve Criswell - hosted HCV meeting to look at TRO's and is assisting Mick George with the reduction of HCV's being used in the area. Further discussions with Colne & Earith regarding a "good neighbour" scheme are taking place and Bluntisham have been invited to attend a meeting scheduled for Monday 21 st March. The clerk advised this date clashes with another meeting so to try and reschedule but to keep Bluntisham in the loop. The good neighbour scheme is well established in Needingworth and works well. The Chair asked if the new cyclepath will be a permissive path? Cllr Criswell confirmed this wouldn't be as there will be a legal agreement in place. Mr Frank Hudson advised that the hedge had been cut along the cycleway but the cuttings haven't been cleared away. Mrs Joan Gutteridge asked why BT infinity is over capacity in the village? Mr Rob Gore confirmed that it is oversubscribed for the cabinet we have in the village, however, all interested parties need to register their interest in the scheme online in order for a new cabinet to be installed or capacity to be increased. Cllr Robin Carter – confirmed that the end of financial year looks good for HDC, the savings made during the year have kept the budget on track. Locally he thanked everyone for their input in the clean for the queen litter pick. He confirmed that having met with the Head of Planning at HDC an application for the 5	

	<p>a) HMC update – 15.2.16. No comments were raised from the minutes from this meeting.</p> <p>b) Finance update – 22.2.16 Unity Trust Bank account to be approved – it was approved to change the PC’s main current account from Lloyds to Unity Trust to allow online payments to be made, which is a requirement for the pension contributions to be made. This will result in additional costs of £60pa for the account fee, but the existing bank have been unable to provide online banking and the additional administrative savings will make up for the additional cost. <i>(Proposed Mr Rob Gore, seconded Mr Gary James. All agreed.)</i> Local Authority Property fund to discuss – it was agreed to discuss this item when more councillors were available. Mr Rob Gore gave a summary of the investment and the clerk had information booklets. Financial Risk Assessment to be approved – following the mid term audit it was recommended that the PC has a Financial RA. The clerk has completed this which the finance committee approve and seek agreement from the full PC. <i>(Proposed Mr Rob Gore, seconded Mrs Kathy Searle. All agreed.)</i></p> <p>c) Allotments update – Mr Frank Hudson advised there was nothing to update.</p> <p>d) Crime – the figures are sent as soon as they are received, although at times this can appear a little delayed based on the dates the crime was committed. The Chair attended a meeting with Sir Graham Bright who confirmed that PCSO’s are now being given the opportunity to specialise in one area making them more experienced and interested. The 101 number has been improved and cases for waiting times being long are reduced and limited to those people who don’t wish to request a call back. Shop lifting crimes are mainly food items. Huntingdon has the only cybercrime unit in the UK, which is attracting a lot of interest from other counties. Highway Warden – the Chair walked around with the CCC Highways Officer who confirmed that there is a new funding scheme which may mean that an application for widening the overgrown footpaths can be made. The grips should have been cut into the verges along the Heath. Markings along the entrance to the garage forecourt advising of the public right of way might be painted in by CCC. Rights of Way Seminar – the Chair attended this training with Mr Frank Hudson and has more information of what can/can’t be done on these routes. The Chair is to share the contact details with the clerk for reference. Mrs Anne Parsons asked if the work carried out to Wood End and Short Lane has actually made any difference to surface water, as it appears to still be lying in big pools in the road. The Chair is to speak with CCC Highways and report back. Mr Mike Francis asked what action is being taken about noisy cars riding around the village. Mr Gary James confirmed that these should be reported to the police, if they have no MOT then a fine can be issued, however, if the car has a legal MOT and they are not committing a driving offence then no action can be taken. Mrs Anne Parsons advised the yellow mini is parking on the road again opposite the junction of Colne Road and East Street.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
2342	<p>Health and Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessments – New Office RA (Clerk) Allotment RA, Fire RA, Plant & machinery RA, Village Hall RA, Health & Safety policy. The clerk has reviewed the risk assessments in line with the mid-term audit recommendation. All were happy with the new copies. The clerk advised the only change was to the new office RA which identified that all the electrical equipment used by the clerk must be PAT tested. • PAT testing – approve quotes. The clerk obtained quotes for PAT testing all electrical items. Plugtest were happy to visit the clerks home to carry out the 	<p>Clerk</p>

	<p>testing of the IT equipment used at no additional cost: MS Electrical - £70.00 Plugtest - £75.00 Draelectricals - £85</p> <p>It was proposed to use Plugtest as they are known to us and offered a more flexible and convenient service than the cheaper quote. The clerk is to arrange this. <i>(Proposed Mr Rob Gore seconded Mr Frank Hudson. All agreed.)</i></p>	
2343	<p>Correspondence received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLCC – the clerk shared the information regarding the change to legal status. No questions were raised. • Ministry of Justice – the clerk shared the correspondence regarding the closed churchyard and is meeting with the clerk of Earith PC to draft the letter to HDC to formally hand this over to them. No further questions raised. • HDC – the clerk advised that the old recycling clothes bank had been replaced with a new one now supporting Planet Aid. No further questions raised. • Rose Homes – the Chair received a phone call from Rose Homes who advised they were interested in developing a site in Wood End, Bluntisham to offer affordable housing. The chair and the clerk both contacted HDC who advised they had a meeting with Rose Homes and stated that only affordable housing would be considered on this site. The clerk suggested inviting Rose Homes and HDC to an open meeting in the village to discuss further. Mr Mike Francis advised that he had been made aware of Rose Homes by HDC and stated any development was unlikely to go ahead so a meeting would not be a good use of time. • Mal O’Neill – the clerk shared an email received regarding children’s motorised toys being used on the recreation area and community orchard. The clerk advised that if vehicles are petrol they can be reported to the police. If they are being ridden responsibly with parental supervision then a common sense approach is to be taken. If however they are being used in a reckless way then they can be reported. The HDC warden or the local 101 number can be used in these cases. • Mrs Wakeham – the clerk is waiting for the tree report and will then reply to the correspondence received on 23 February 2016. • Mr John Morgan – the parish council have replied to this correspondence and the Chair has written a formal apology. 	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
2344	<p>Date of Annual Parish Meeting – Monday 16th May at 8pm Date of Annual meeting of the council – Monday 9th May at 8pm Date of Open day – Saturday 21st May 10 – 12pm <i>(Proposed Mrs Kathy Searle, seconded Mr Rob Gore. All agreed.)</i></p>	Clerk
2345	<p>Items for consideration (for information only) The Chair asked the clerk about the next WEEE collection. The clerk advised that the company are short staffed and she will chase again to secure a date. Mr Mike Francis thanked those involved with the litter pick, it was well organised and attended. Mr Jonathan Clarke thanked the clerk for her input for organising the event and suggested setting a date for 2017 now. The clerk confirmed that the PC had been unsuccessful with their recent LHI bid for the improvements to the school crossing. It will be added to the April agenda for further discussion.</p>	Clerk
2346	<p>Topics for future meetings – Mr Rob Gore advised that a buried engine had been discovered at the litter pick and asked how it was to be removed. The clerk advised that HDC will collect large items and to confirm the exact location. Mr Frank Hudson asked if any further quotes had been received for a new/second hand mower and to have this as an agenda item for April. It was suggested to contact Mr Woodfield in the village to see if he would quote for repairs.</p>	

Meeting closed 22.04pm Next meeting: 4th April 2016

Dates of Future Parish Council Meetings –2016

May	Monday 9 th May
June	Monday 6 th June
July	Monday 4 th July
August	Monday 1 st August
September	Monday 5 th September
October	Monday 3 rd October
November	Monday 7 th November
December	Monday 5 th December

Annex 1 – FY 2015/16 accounts to end February 2016