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**Minutes of the Bluntisham Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 1st February 2017 at 8.00pm in The Village Hall, Mill Lane,
Bluntisham**

Present: Vice Chairman: Mr Mark Berg, Mrs Philippa Hope, Mr Gary James, Mrs Kathy Searle, Mr Rob Gore, Mr Frank Hudson, Mr Ian Shepherd, Mrs Tracey Davidson (Clerk),
Also present: 15 x members of the public

Open forum

Mr Mark Berg opened the meeting as Vice Chair with the following statement:
As you can see I am sitting in the chair as Vice Chairman as the Chairman has resigned since the last full parish council meeting. On her request she wanted her letter of resignation to be read out. This wasn't included as an agenda item as this isn't protocol. See *appendix 1* for the letter.

Speaking on behalf of the parish council I would like to thank Mrs Margaret Lumb for her commitment and hard work during her 10 years and wish her well. As for the parish council we look forward to continue serving the community as we have done to all our parishioners.

The election of a new chair is the first agenda item so following the open forum this will be discussed.

I welcome any questions from the public on the items on the agenda and ask for all questions to go through the Vice Chair.

Open Forum

Cllr Mike Francis, asked why the open forum isn't a formal agenda item. ***Post meeting note: the clerk has followed previous format for agendas and has since sought advice from the CEO at LCPAS who advised the open forum can be before the formal meeting starts or as an agenda item. Bluntisham Parish Council are there for complaint with guidelines and are following the agreed procedure laid down by previous Parish Councils***

Cllr Mike stated: - the clerk is paid an additional salary fee to be RFO. As RFO she should have a detailed knowledge of the Parish Council accounts. Why therefore, does she allow or ask a Parish Councillor to present the accounts and take questions about them at Parish Council meetings?

Mr Rob Gore advised the RFO is not required to talk at each parish council meeting, payments are all authorised by the chair using the purchase order system introduced by the new Finance committee to ensure more transparency. All payments are authorised by 2 electronic signatories and purchase orders/invoices/receipts are sent electronically to those signatories prior to authorising. Where there is any personal interest in any payment the authorised signatory is not allowed to authorise the payment. As this is electronic a record is kept forever and is easy to search on the banks website. When I was the chair of the Finance committee I wanted to read the report to the parish council to demonstrate that I had interrogated the accounts on behalf of the parish council to ensure that all money spent was authorised and I could say 100% that the accounts produced by RFO were a true record.

Mrs Philippa Hope made reference to the Finance Terms of Reference, [click here](#) to access, which state that the Finance committee will support the RFO and will

	<p><i>report back to the PC on any under/overspends having interrogated the accounts. Mr Rob Gore reminded Cllr Mike Francis that these TOR were adopted during his time on the parish council.</i></p> <p><i>The Clerks contract of employment does not state any additional salary is paid for being the RFO as her Job Title is Clerk & RFO.</i></p> <p>Cllr Mike Francis stated that all other parish councils have the RFO reading out the accounts at parish council meetings.</p> <p><i>Mr Rob Gore advised that the decision to report on the accounts was taken by the Finance committee and hasn't changed for the past 18 months.</i></p> <p>Cllr Mike Francis stated the Clerk and a Councillor appear to be in a personal relationship. A relationship between a councillor and a paid employee of the Parish Council should be declared in the interest of openness and transparency</p> <p><i>The Vice Chair asked to take advice before responding to this point, however Mr Gary James did state that in the 30 years as a parish councillor there have been clerk and councillor relationships which haven't caused any concern. I myself had a close friendship with a clerk and didn't declare any interest. Post meeting note: the council's website and councillors contact details reflect the councillors new address. The councillor has been registered on the electoral role since November 2016 and an updated register of interests is with the District Council for publication, however, the councillor has no financial interest in this new address.</i></p> <p>Cllr Mike Francis stated the general conduct of one or two councillors in particular, at Parish Council meetings, falls far below the code of conduct expected of a Parish Councillor. For example, the councillors constantly interrupt any speaker as and when they see fit thus making it difficult for the chairman to conduct an orderly meeting.</p> <p><i>Mr Mark Berg made reference to the previous chairman who confirmed she was happy to allow the flow of the meeting to ensure all parties had made their point. I take note of the points raised.</i></p> <p>Mrs Joan Gutteridge thanked the PC for their kind words about Mrs Margaret Lumb and wanted to add that she is an invaluable member of the parish. She asked if the resignation letter could be printed, see above link to the letter.</p> <p>Mrs Gutteridge asked for an update on item 241, the clerk advised this will be discussed in the meeting.</p> <p>She raised concern with item 243 and stated that some land owners still haven't cleared their ditches and asked for progress on the parish council ditches. The vice chairman advised this would be discussed as part of the meeting.</p> <p>The meeting opened at 8.16pm</p>	
229	Election of new Chairman following resignation – Mr Frank Hudson proposed Mr Mark Berg to be the new Chairman, Mr Gary James seconded. All agreed. Mr Mark Berg signed the declaration of office as Chairman and continued with the meeting. <i>(Proposed Mr Frank Hudson, seconded Mr Gary James. All agreed.)</i>	
230	Dispensation Forms received & decisions given - None	
231	Declarations of interest for items on the agenda – Mr Mark Berg item 245 - 4 The Paddock.	
232	Apologies for absence – Mr Martin Crowhurst, Mrs Cynthia Curtis, Mr Alan Moules, Cllr Robin Carter	
233	Minutes of the Parish Council meeting dated 4th January to be approved and signed by the chairman – The chairman signed the minutes. <i>(Proposed Mr Rob Gore, seconded Mrs Kathy Searle. All agreed.)</i>	
234	Matters arising from previous minutes –.None.	
235	Blasters floodlights & old changing rooms – Mr Russ Banks asked the parish council for their approval for the blasters to use portable battery operated floodlights with a view	

	<p>to purchasing 16 sets to use for junior training during the week. The parish council asked where the blasters proposed to train? Mr Russ Banks advised they would use different sections of the cricket boundary and grass area behind the village hall to reduce the wear and tear on the grass. The parish council asked for a letter to be sent to the Feoffee's asking for permission to use the cricket boundary for weekly training and to write a letter to all Mill Lane residents, in conjunction with the parish council, to advise that portable floodlights would be used on a weekly basis for the junior blasters to train. Mr Rob Gore asked why the blasters wouldn't use the existing pitches for training, Mr Russ Banks advised these get worn out at the weekends with several matches being played so need some recovery time.</p> <p><i>(Proposed Mrs Kathy Searle, seconded Mr Rob Gore. All agreed.)</i></p> <p>Old Changing Rooms –The Blasters have discussed the potential for improvements to the old village hall and feel that it would be more beneficial to remove the existing mobile and extend the old changing rooms with a brick construction and provide a more useful space for all clubs to use. Mrs Philippa Hope confirmed that planning permission would be needed. The land is owned by the Feoffees so permission would be needed from them. Costs to remove the old building and to replace with a wooden structure would cost approx £700 per sqm. The parish council agreed they have no problem with the Blasters investigating options and to report back when convenient.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Blasters</p>
236	Village Christmas Lights – this item was deferred to the next meeting.	
237	<p>FY2016/17 Accounts to end January 2017 –</p> <p>Mr Rob Gore advised not much to report. The parish council accounts are showing an overspend as highlighted last month, which is down to the new mower. The income received is greater due to the sale of both the Massey Ferguson and John Deere. The village hall income is still lower than projected, however, further enquiries received this week may reduce this.</p> <p>Expenditure - £4,925.43 Income - £2,550.26 Bank balance - £29,607.47 Cams building society - £56901.73</p> <p><i>(Proposed Mrs Philippa Hope, seconded Mr Gary James. All agreed.)</i></p>	
238	Accounts for payment for January payments – All payments made by BACS authorised by Mr Rob Gore and Mr Alan Moules. Mr Rob Gore signed the summary document. <i>(Proposed Mr Frank Hudson, seconded Mr Ian Shepherd. All agreed.)</i>	
239	Authorise any purchase orders for January – the clerk advised there were no purchase orders to sign, however, due to the account with majestic wine not being set up, additional alcohol may need to be purchased by the clerk for the next event. Mr Gary James asked the clerk to check if other parish councils have purchase cards for the clerk to use instead of her own money.	Clerk
240	<p>County Council & District Council reports</p> <p>Cllr Criswell advised the submission for the LHI bid was presented in January by the clerk, this scored favourably, however, a decision won't be received until mid March. Further frustrations with the cycleway continue, however, the clerk is to draft a letter on behalf of the parish council reiterating the parish council will provide a dog proof fence and plant a hedge and will maintain the hedge on the footpath side, if the landowner keeps the hedge to a 2m height. Cllr Criswell advised the county should be able to provide the initial fence. The parish council advised there is £6,000 allocated in the reserves for this.</p> <p>Cllr Mike Francis - nothing to report.</p>	Clerk

241	<p>Meeting Walk update – the clerk shared the information received from the solicitor regarding getting the footpath registered. The solicitor has intimated that it would be costly to try and register the hedge as the parishes ownership and may not get the result they want. Mr Ian Shepherd asked if no land owner can be established and no registration can take place then surely no changes to the use of Meeting Walk can take place, as CCC have confirmed they will not grant permission without the landowners consent. Mr Mark Berg suggested putting a cycle gate to make the crossing safer.</p> <p>The following actions were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerk to contact Ivor Stocker to see if a copy of the original plans are available to show how permission was granted for the original openings to the footpath at Orchard End. • Clerk to re-confirm the hedge location with the solicitor to see if this changes their decision. • Clerk to arrange a site visit with Jo Challis from CCC to discuss further. Cllr Criswell offered help with this and would be willing to attend any meeting. 	Clerk
242	<p>Parish Archives – the clerk advised of the state of the old documents in the garage, some of which were stored in cardboard boxes. She confirmed what should be retained and for how long and suggested a cull of old unnecessary documents takes place in May. Mr Gary James advised that CCC archives used to take any unwanted documents for their national archives. The clerk is to investigate and to find out what the costs are.</p>	Clerk
243	<p>Parish Council Ditches – Mr Frank Hudson agreed to establish the location of these ditches and report back at the next meeting.</p>	Frank Hudson
244	<p>Community Speedwatch – the clerk asked if anyone would be willing to set up an initial meeting with those people who have volunteered for speedwatch until Martin is well enough to return.</p> <p>Mr Rob Gore and Mr Mark Berg were happy to set up a meeting. The clerk is to share contact details.</p>	Rob Gore
245	<p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16/01537/HHFUL – First floor rear extension with Juliet balcony Finmere Lodge, 17 High Street, Bluntisham. Mrs Kathy Searle summarised the application which does not overlook any neighbours, nor have any objections been received. The parish council recommended APPROVAL for this application. <i>(Proposed Mrs Kathy Searle, seconded Mr Frank Hudson. All agreed.)</i> • 17/0005/HHFUL – Two storey extension to the rear & side of property to include living space, utility room & bedroom with en-suite. 9 Presses Close, Bluntisham. Mrs Kathy Searle advised this application height had been reduced since the previous application 7 years ago, which impacted on the neighbouring property. The extension fits into the close well, wraps round the house nicely and is inkeeping with the garage brickwork. The parish council recommended APPROVAL for this application. <i>(Proposed Mr Gary James, seconded Mr Ian Shepherd. All agreed.)</i> • 17/00041/TREE – Tree application 5 The Paddock, Bluntisham. Mrs Kathy Searle recommended APPROVAL for this application especially as one tree has a massive split along the middle making it dangerous. <i>(Proposed Mr Rob Gore, seconded Mr Gary James. All agreed.)</i> • 17/00042/TREE – Tree application 4 The Paddock, Bluntisham - Mrs Kathy Searle recommended APPROVAL for this application especially as one tree overhangs the High Street and could cause damage in strong winds. <i>(Proposed Mr Rob Gore, seconded Mr Gary James. All agreed with exception of Mr Mark Berg who didn't vote.)</i> • 16/01737/FUL – erection of 6 dwellings to land rear of 22 High Street. Decision to support applicant with next step. The parish council agreed to suggest a site 	

	<p>meeting with HDC and Mr Bailey to try and reach a compromise for this site. The clerk is to amend the letter and send to HDC for the attention of Mr Andy Moffatt. <i>(Proposed Mr Rob Gore, seconded Mrs Philippa Hope. All agreed.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidwells – the clerk advised that Bidwells are looking to carry out a public exhibition for proposals to the land off Colne Road, Bluntisham. The date hasn't been confirmed but will be advertised as soon as possible. Bidwells would like to attend the parish council meeting on 1st March to feedback. <i>Post meeting note: Bidwells have confirmed the exhibition will take place on Tuesday 21st February in the school. Leaflets to be sent to all households w/c 11 February.</i> • Proposed base station installation at Bluntisham Water Tower – the parish council had been consulted on the addition of a dish onto an existing pole on the old water tower on behalf of Vodafone. No objections were raised. 	
246	<p>Village Maintenance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedge cutting contract 2017 onwards – the clerk advised that only one quote had been received as all others (5 in total) didn't want to quote either too busy to put the quote together or too busy to take on the additional work. The clerk is to start again and feed back to the next meeting. Mr Gary James asked if it was possible to get an hourly rate from the company who did quote to use as a benchmark. • Phone box – this item was deferred to the next meeting • WI donation of bulbs/seeds location – the parish council thanked the WI for their kind donation and suggested planning daffodils along the fence (cricket pitch side) leading up towards the village hall. Any leftovers can be planted in the front beds. 	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
247	<p>Committee updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HMC meeting – 100club discuss when Cynthia Curtis is back • Finance meeting –report as above ref 237 • Allotments committee – Mr Frank Hudson advised clearing of plot 7 should be complete in the next 2 weeks. The clerk has rented out the other 2 ½ plots which leaves only plot 7 vacant. • Staff management – Mr Rob Gore advised that following the clerks appraisal some objectives were set for the coming year. Promotion of events decided by HMC Website updates Timeliness of agendas, sharing information, correspondence, etc Managing promotions budget – HMC Management of staff Arrange 2 councillor events per year Councillors were reminded to reply to the clerk when emails are headed REPLY PLEASE. The clerk is to look into using voting options for decisions needed in-between meetings. The clerk is to print all correspondence for Mr Frank Hudson and share weekly. The clerk has been given more flexibility with allocation of hours to ensure enough time is given to the village hall. These hours will not exceed 23 per week as per her contract. The next meeting is to be arranged in April, thereafter a 3 monthly meeting will be arranged. 	
248	<p>Event update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27th January Ghost of Mr Dickens– the clerk advised of the income and feedback received following this event. Those who attended enjoyed the show. Thanks to Mrs Kathy Searle and Mr Roly Searle for the bar. Total profit for the event £153.11. • 4th February Pop Quiz– SOLD OUT. Mr Gary James agreed to an 80's quiz on Saturday 6th May. This will be promoted at the quiz. • 10th February Mexican Night – SOLD OUT. The clerk is to ensure adequate 	<p>Mark</p>

	alcohol is available for this event. Mr Mark Berg and the clerk are to set up the hall with the drapes for this event.	Berg/ clerk
249	<p>Correspondence received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bluntisham cricket club – cancel funding application – the clerk drafted a letter to confirm the cancellation of the 4 grants process. The cricket club confirmed they are still looking at options for funding for this area. Mr Mark Berg signed the letter. 	
250	<p>Items for consideration (for information only)</p> <p>Mr Ian Shepherd advised the link to local businesses had now been set up on the website, all councillors are encouraged to have a look and feedback any changes to Mr Ian Shepherd.</p> <p>Mrs Philippa Hope suggested an open morning. Saturday 22nd April from 10 – 12pm. Mrs Philippa Hope is to contact all local groups to encourage attendance and the clerk is to produce a flyer.</p> <p>The clerk asked for a further volunteer willing to be added to the village hall call out list. Mr Rob Gore volunteered.</p> <p>The clerk drafted a letter for signing by Mrs Philippa Hope, Mr Rob Gore and Mr Mark Berg to amend the signatory details with the Cambridge Building Society.</p> <p>Mrs Philippa Hope thanked Mrs Kathy Searle and Mr Frank Hudson for their work planting the new hedge along the fence in Mill Lane.</p>	Philipp a Hope

Meeting closed 21:55 Next meeting: Wednesday 1st March 2017

Future Meeting dates

Wednesday	5 th April	2017
Wednesday	3 rd May	2017
Wednesday	7 th June	2017
Wednesday	5 th July	2017
Wednesday	2 nd August	2017
Wednesday	6 th September	2017
Wednesday	4 th October	2017
Wednesday	1 st November	2017
Wednesday	6 th December	2017