Garsington Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Monday 4th April 2005 commencing at 7.30 pm. The Chairman, Councillor Godfrey Eden, presided; present were Councillors Paul Bolam, David Baker, Cliff Moss and Cliff Shuker with G Russell in attendance. County Cllr David Turner, District Cllr Ann Tomline and five residents were present for part of the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence were accepted from Cllrs Anne Eastwood, who was on holiday, and Gurdip Saini due to family illness.

2 Public Participation

a. Monica Waud urged the Parish Council to send a representative to speak at the District Council's Cabinet meeting on 7th April when a report about the Planning Enforcement department would be discussed. It was feared that its activities might be reduced at a time when in fact there are many cases which require action to be taken.

b. Monica Waud commented upon the application for renewal of the Theatre Restricted Licence for Garsington Manor, which the Council would be discussing later in its meeting. In its response to the consultation process, she asked the Council to comment that the Opera still fails to observe all the conditions that were attached to the planning approval and to report that the safety of the residents of Southend is compromised by the lack of due care displayed by some of those associated with both producing and attending the performances.

d Basil Townsend asked about the status of the Traffic Calming project. The Chairman explained that residents living adjacent to the proposed calming devices had been consulted as the first stage of a process that in due course would involve consultation with the whole village.

e. The Chairman assured Andrew Clarke that the Parish Council had not prejudged the traffic calming debate and that full consultation will take place. Mr Clarke criticised the cutbacks in the school bus service and said that he would rather the County spent money on making sure that children get safely to their schools than on traffic calming schemes which should receive a lower priority.

Cllr Bolam commented that the Parish Council is very open in its discussion of these matters and the County itself has insisted that the scheme will only proceed if it has the support of residents. County Cllr David Turner said that he believed it was wrong for children living in rural areas to have to pay to travel to school. The problem is that the Government grant to Oxfordshire underestimates the rural nature of the county.

3 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman and Cllrs Bolam and Shuker all declared a prejudicial interest in the matter of the renewal of the Opera's Theatre Licence.

4 Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held 7th March 2005

These were approved after Suzanne Willers had her name correctly spelt and the word 'drawings' was substituted for 'plans' in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Minute reference 13. Traffic Calming

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. The Chairman has replied to John Goodey's letter in Garsington Newsletter. Councillors had read and approved of the Chairman's comments.

b. The Royal Mail box in Wheatley Rd is now reinstated

c. Malcolm Roberts has been told about hedge on Kiln Lane. He may cut it back himself in due course.

d. Peter Rodger did not ask the Council for any further action in connection with the Community Hall planning appeal.

e. The Clerk said that he had been told by Mike Patrick that the Sports Club treasurer is going to contact him about payment of the peppercorn rent but so far he had not done so yet.

f. Through the Clerk, Cllr Mrs Anne Eastwood reported that the school does not intend to make frequent use of the playing field

g. Cllr Moss has contacted Judith Osborn again about the Birch Road trees. He has been advised that the matter is in hand but has been given a low priority.

h. The Chairman said that he would write to John Palmer about the land adjacent to the old school.

i. The Chairman has met with Mr Collins and discussed the inappropriate planting on Oxford Road. Mr Collins had said that he would consider removing the offending plants if these could be identified to him. District Cllr Mrs Tomline said the 'pampas grass' is considered by some to be a safety hazard. The Chairman suggested that this matter should be discussed again as an agenda item at a future meeting.

6 County Councillor’s Report

Cllr David Turner conformed that he has asked for repairs to the Clinkards Hill pavement to be put in the small works budget for 2005/6. Brian Short had told him that the bank adjacent to the high path in Southend is now considered to be stable. It was agreed, however, that the vegetation needs to be cut back.

On behalf of Peter Ronald, Cllr Turner asked how the traffic calming consultation process is developing. Mr Ronald is keen to hear reactions to the drawings.

With reference to the bus services Cllr Turner said that the subsidy is in place until 2007 but he would like to know what use is being made of the buses to Cuddesdon and Wheatley. Councillors thought the service is poorly used and it was suggested that more publicity for the service would help. Cllr Turner said that he would appreciate more comments and that the Newsletter should invite these.

7 District Councillor’s Report

Cllr Mrs Tomline said that the flood prevention measures are nearly complete.

She is seeing the Enforcement team at SODC about the scrap yard's recent expansion into other activities. Cllr Moss said that the property on Kiln Lane shows no sign of complying with the planning enforcement notice.

Cllr Mrs Tomline said that she was concerned about the future of the Council's planning enforcement process and intended to speak about this at the Cabinet meeting on 7th April. The Chairman agreed that he would represent the Parish Council's concerns at the same meeting and the Clerk was asked to make the arrangements so that Cllr Eden could speak. The Parish Council will discuss this matter again at its next meeting.

The District Council now has an officer to deal specifically with complaints about tall hedges etc and details will be published in the next Newsletter.

Cllr Mrs Tomline said she will be unable to attend the Annual Parish Meeting in May but will send a report.

8 Finance and cheques for signature

The balances were reported as:

Barclays Bank on 31st March £4,388.04

Bank of Ireland on 11th March £114,642.29

Bank of Ireland interest was £425.57 and advertising receipts were £235

The Statement of Assurance for submission to the Auditors was approved.

The following cheques were approved for payment

OALC (Sub) £301.52

Total Pest Control £164.50

OALC (accounts training course) £41.12

Clerk salary Mar/April £262.69

Clerk expenses Mar/April £48.60

Village Hall rental charge £70.00

The changes to the Bank of Ireland mandate will be put in place at the next meeting which will also discuss making a donation in response to an appeal from Childline.

9 Planning

a. Application

P05/W0342 Boundary Bungalow, Wheatley Road

Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of new dwelling (two storey)

The Council considered that this application should be approved.

b. Decisions and other Planning Matters

P05/W0109/RET Red Lion Public House

Kitchen extract ductwork. Planning approval granted 29th March.

(Use forbidden between 23:00 hrs and 06:00)

P05/W0040 131 Oxford Road;

Proposed two storey and single storey rear extension to existing dwelling

Planning permission granted 14th March

P05/W0052 18 The Green

Conversion of existing barn/ancillary building into a small one-bedroom dwelling

Planning permission granted 14th March

P04/W1216 Willow House, 87 Southend; erection of a two-storey extension to dwelling. Erection of a detached double garage and summerhouse.

The Council noted that Mr and Mrs Calogirou are to appeal following the Council's refusal to grant planning permission.

10 Correspondence to Chairman and Clerk

a. Old Village Cross; Liz Walker of IJP has met on site with English Heritage and thinks that a compromise has been agreed, which should reduce the cost of the work. She is, however, still waiting for a formal response.

b. CPRE Thame/Bullingdon Branch; The Council has been offered the possibility of assistance in opposing 'any development which is planned to damage our area.' The CPRE wants to be kept informed.

c. The County has advised its intention to put a signpost at Watlington Road end of Footpath 5 near Great Leys Farm and to cut back the hedge that impedes access to the stile at this point.

d. It was agreed (by 3 votes to 2) to ask the RoSPA Playground inspector to carry out a play area risk assessment at the same time as the safety inspection.

11 Licensing Consultation - Theatre Restricted Licence, Garsington Manor

Renewal 7th June to 9th July

The Chairman and Cllrs Bolam and Shuker, having declared prejudicial interests in this matter, left the room while this matter was discussed.

This made the meeting inquorate and the Clerk was asked to communicate with the Environmental Health section explaining this. In the view of the two councillors remaining in the meeting there should be no objection to the licence being renewed as long as all conditions relating to the planning permission are observed.

12 Land off Oxford Road

Another quote for the landscaping works has received, this one being from Speedcut Contractors. Cllr Shuker proposed that before any work is approved the costs of fencing, styles, gates etc should be determined and then a plan for the whole project could be agreed. Cllr Baker will suggest the names of possible contractors and the Clerk will discuss the planning issues with SODC and the possibility of registering the plot as common land. It was agreed by 3 votes to 1 to proceed on this basis.

13 Traffic Calming

The results of the consultation exercise were reported. In Oxford Road out of 93 questionnaires 24 had been returned of which 19 were in favour and 5 against although, of these, 3 had said that they were in favour of the idea of something to calm traffic. In Wheatley Road out of 54 questionnaires, 27 had been returned of which 17 were in favour and 10 against.

The Council voted unanimously to ask the County to proceed to the next stage of consultation. Peter Ronald will be asked for speed survey data and also for data which measures the impact of the traffic calming scheme in Chinnor.

14. Affordable Housing

The Chairman said that since the identity of the suggested sites for affordable housing developments are not confidential a number of residents had expressed concerns. Cllr Bolam will contact Mrs Willers to obtain the map that identifies the sites and will arrange a meeting of the sub-committee. The Chairman said that the identity of sites which have been ruled out as possible locations need not be publicised any further.

15 Village Maintenance

The Clerk reported that Highways have said that the Council can plant trees on the village green and elsewhere as long as the trees are planted a minimum of 5m. from the centre of carriageway. He also confirmed that Ian Young has been asked to quote for cutting the play area hedge and ISIS Accord have been asked to quote for Sadlers Croft surface repairs.

BT are investigating the matter of the phone box at Kings Copse. Cllr Baker said that he believed that is a condition of the site licence that a phone box should be available for emergency use.

The Clerk has spoken to Pauline Nichols of Kings Copse Residents Assn. She would prefer that the Council leaves matters re the notice board with her for the time being as it is only one of several matters that she is discussing with Mr Hill, the proprietor.

Garsington Players are about to purchase and a plant a new Christmas Tree.

Cllr Bolam complimented the District Council for its recent prompt action in dealing with a fly-tipping problem.

Cllr Shuker said the seat at the Gizzel is beyond repair and should be replaced. It was unanimously agreed to purchase a replacement seat. Ian Young will remove the old one and place a protective cover over the metal post.

It was agreed that the Clerk should contact Rev. Cowles about the levelling of graves to facilitate care and maintenance of the grass in the burial ground.

The Chairman said that he had been approached by a parishioner about a pile of wood, which had been removed without the parishioner's permission. It had been alleged that the Parish Council was involved but this was not the case.

Cllr Shuker said that the standard District Council issue of refuse bin is not up to the requirements of the play area. He said that a bin made of concrete would be the answer.

16 Review of Code of Conduct

The questionnaire had been circulated but in view of the fact that the Council's comments are not required until 17th June it was agreed that this matter could be carried over.

The meeting closed at 9.56 pm