Garsington Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Monday 6th August 2007 commencing at 7.30 pm. The Chairman, Cllr Godfrey Eden, presided; present were Cllrs David Baker, Paul Bolam, John Hieatt, with G Russell in attendance. Also present were District Councillor Elizabeth Gillespie and five residents.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllrs Anne Eastwood, Judith Westgate and Chris Wright, and County Cllr David Turner who were on holiday.

2 Public Participation

Monica Waud said that the question of responsibility for the management of vegetation overhanging roads and pathways had been raised in the Newsletter and she would like some action on the verges between her home in Southend and the bend in the road by The Gizzel. The Chairman said that he would make a site visit.

Basil Townsend said that he feels there is a tendency for the County Council to neglect maintenance works that are properly their responsibility because the Council officers know that in the end the Parish Councils would do what was necessary in the best interest of their residents. The Chairman said that where safety is an issue the Parish Council had to take action if other authorities did not.

Mr and Mrs Richard Jeffery of 3 The Green had received the Clerk’s letter to residents whose properties back on to the bend opposite The Plough and Village Hall. They said that as recent purchasers of their property they had the available Land Registry data which showed that their boundary was well inside the line of the hedge. They supplied the Clerk with a contact phone number for Mr John Palmer who owns one of the houses and adjoining land but who lets the property and resides in Reading.

3 Declarations of Interest

None.

4 Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd July 2007

The minutes as circulated were approved and signed.

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

i.) Cllr Bolam confirmed that there were two issues about the contract with Total Pest Control for mole control on Playing Field which concerned him. The first is about the methods used and the second is whether this is in fact something that the Council should be paying for. He would contact the contractor and raise the questions direct.

ii). The Council confirmed that in the matter of raising the weight restriction for the roads in the Parish it would rather have some limit, even if this was thought to be too high, that no restrictions at all.

iii). District Cllr Gillespie said that she is going to make arrangements for all the interested councillors to visit a recycling depot. This would probably be in September.

iv) The Chairman confirmed that he has delivered the Council’s early Minute Books to the County Records Office for safe storage and had obtained receipt. The Clerk still holds the complete set of Minute Books of meetings from 1977 onwards.

v). Councillors Baker, Bolam, Hieatt and Westgate have completed their Declarations of Interest and handed them to the Clerk.

vi) The Chairman confirmed that he has repaired the damaged caused by tunnelling in the play area by the aerial slide.

vii) Mr and Mrs Jeffery confirmed that they have used the late night bus service from Oxford and found it very satisfactory.

6 County Councillor’s Report

County Cllr David Turner is on holiday and had sent his apologies along with the data arising from the traffic survey carried out early in June. This has now ben circulated to all councillors. Cllr Turner suggests that this survey is discussed at the September PC meeting.

The County Highways inspector, Mike Dickerson, has told the Clerk that a works order has already placed for Clinkards Hill vegetation. He may also be able to have surface repairs done to the footway, especially near the seat. These matters had been reported to Mr Dickerson by Cllr Turner followed by a complaint from Mike Patrick. Mr Patrick had also mentioned a problem with the ditch which had been constructed near Larch End to stop the flow of water from the neighbouring field. The Clerk has reported this to Dave Baldwin of Monsons, the District Council’s drainage engineers.

7 District Councillor’s Report

District Cllr Mrs Gillespie said that the report from the Examination in Public into future housing development in the Green Belt around Oxford is expected very soon. She has reported a huge pothole that has appeared in the middle of The Green.

8 Finance

Balances and cheques for signature

Barclays Current Account at 30th July £14,552.37

Bank of Ireland at 5th June £126,576.05 (interest earned £518.04)

Other income received during the month comprised advertising receipts £740, Burial Fees £168, TOE grant towards cost of Oxford Road project £5,000 and a credit note from Nicholson Nurseries for £486.21 plus VAT. After taking this credit into account a new cheque to Nicholson Nurseries had been drawn on the Bank of Ireland A/c.

The following cheques were approved for payment:

Colourplus (June/July issue) £764.82

J A King (Play equipment painting) £1,100.00

Bryans Lock Services (Fixing dog waste bins) £58.75

Information Commissioner (annual fee) £35.00

Total Pest Control (UK) Ltd £164.50

OALC (four places on Training morning 10/10) £94.00

CPRE (annual subscription) £27.00

G Russell (Clerk’s salary) £315.90

G Russell (Admin) £98.40

Garsington Village Hall hire £60.00

J J Bark (machinery maintenance) £91.05

Thames CAB £200.00

Oxfordshire Association for the Blind £50.00

The Clerk said that Playdale has asked for a deposit payment amounting to 50% of order value (£2,955 +VAT) for the roundabout which had a lead time of 7-8 weeks. The Council agreed that it did not wish to make this payment and would find an alternative supplier.

The Council approved the Financial Risk Assessment which was brought forward for another year and agreed that between now and the next meeting it would assist the Clerk in preparing a schedule of the Council’s assets. This had been asked for at last year’s internal audit. The Annual Return would be available for approval at the September council meeting.

9 Planning

a. Applications

P07/W0721 15 Poplar Close; Convert integral garage to living space at front of property

The Council had no strong views about this application

P07/W0746 8 Kiln Lane; New dwelling with garage and new access

The Council recommended that this application should be refused. The site is not suitable for development.

P07/W0819 15 Southend; Demolition of existing side extensions and construction of new single side extension

The Council agreed that this application should be recommended for approval.

P07/W0846/RET; 10 & 11 Hazel End; Removal of conditions 2 & 7 (materials submitted and approved before commencement) and condition 3 (landscaping scheme submitted and approved before commencement) of planning permission P04/W0723 for the erection of two dwellings (retrospective)

The Council had no strong views about this application

P07/W0911/Conservation Area Consent); The Well House,15 Southend; Demolition of single storey extensions to the NW side of the main house.

The Council had no strong views about this application

b. Decisions and other planning matters

P07/W0507 27 Elm Drive Change of use A1 to A3

The Council noted that this application had been refused

10 Correspondence to Chairman and Clerk

a. The Chairman said that he would have a look at the consultation documents about the future provision of camp sites for travellers and gypsies and respond to the consultations if he thought necessary.

b. The Chairman has been approached by a resident who lives adjacent to Phipps Well asking if the Parish Council would consider selling the land. The Council confirmed that as a matter of principle it has no intention of selling any of its land and the Clerk was asked to inform the resident of that decision. The Chairman commented that he hoped that there might be a better system of maintenance in Phipps Well which would reduce the problem of weeds spreading.

c. The Council has been asked for is views about the future use of the Village Hall as a polling station. Comments received praised the central location of the hall and that by using the hall rather than the school – which might also be considered suitable – it avoided the need to disrupt the school’s programme. It was recognised, however, that access for disabled persons is not good.

d. The Council has been invited to send a representative to one of the South Oxfordshire Partnership workshops but no-one was available to g. Cllr Mrs Gillespie said that she might be able to attend one of the meetings and would report back.

e. The Chairman paid tribute to the nearly 25 years of service given to the Parish by Cllr Mrs Ann Tomline and asked councillors to consider what would be an appropriate presentation as a token of the Council’s appreciation.

11 Village Hall: report on recent meeting

Cllr Baker said that in an attempt to improve security arrangements new locks will be fitted to the Hall and there will be a limit to the number of key-holders. There has been a recent discussion about the possibility of building a new hall on the existing site but there has been no recent contact with the Garsington Sports and Social Club, which now has a new chairman, Mr J R McAvoy of 119 Wheatley Road. The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Tuesday 25th September commencing at 7.30 pm. An application for an entertainments licence is to be made.

12 Burial Ground Regulations

Cllr Bolam said that he felt no further amendment is necessary to the document agreed earlier in the year between Rev. Cowles and Cllr Cliff Shuker other than to expressly include the provision of the tablets on ashes plots within the rules. It was said that Ernie Tipping is now maintaining the area of the ashes plots.

13 Village Maintenance

Cllr Hieatt said that the quote for graffiti clearance received from Oxford City Council amounted to £114 plus VAT. The Chairman emphasised that the approval of the property owner must be obtained before contractors could start work.

14 Parsler’s Piece – opening date

The TOE grant of £5,000 has been received but the SODC grant of £7,000 is going to require something being done about disabled access before it is paid, since the grant application had given assurances about the site’s accessibility.

A ‘grand opening’ event is required for publicity purposes and there needs to be advertising of the new facility within the village. There must also be notices displayed which refer to the grants received.

It was agreed that the area could perhaps be opened informally on the forthcoming bank holiday weekend and there could be a more formal opening by Mrs Osborne in September. The County Council might be willing to improve the surface of the access from Oxford Road – the Clerk will enquire.

15 Road safety at The Plough junction

The Chairman reported that he had met on site with County Cllr David Turner and Area Traffic Engineer Peter Ronald to discuss measures to improve visibility and safety at the junction.

As there are no accidents recorded for the junction there is no justification to spend money for improvements. However the County is prepared to change the road markings which should help the situation. The engineer has marked the road with the changes; a solid white area bringing the carriageway half a metre away from the Old School side bank and bringing forward the give way markings opposite The Plough. Slow signs will be marked on the Hill carriageway.

The anticipated effect of these changes will be to improve visibility and reduce the speed of vehicles coming down the Hill. Should these measures be satisfactory they could become permanent with a curbed area replacing the solid painted area.

16 Traffic Survey results

The tables of results have been sent round by e-mail but as County Cllr Turner is not present the matter will be discussed at the September meeting following which Cllr Turner will set a date for a meeting of the five parishes (Great Haseley, Great Milton, Little Milton, Garsington and Stadhampton) plus The Baldons who also wish to participate.

Meeting closed at 9.35 p.m