Garsington Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Monday 5th December 2005 commencing at 7.30 pm

The Chairman, Councillor Godfrey Eden, presided; present were Councillors David Baker, Paul Bolam, Anne Eastwood and Cliff Shuker with G Russell in attendance. Also present for part of the meeting were County Cllr David Turner, District Cllr Ann Tomline and six residents of the Parish.

1. Apologies for Absence were accepted from Cllrs Cliff Moss and Gurdip Saini who are unwell.

2 Public Participation

a. Jim Paton re-emphasised the dangerous condition of Kiln Lane. County Cllr David Turner said that he had already prompted both Mark Sumner and Brian Short to encourage some action to be taken urgently.

b. Mr Paton went on to say that a hedge had been ripped out from land near the boundary of Kings Copse, much to the dismay of the Park residents. Cllr Baker said that he been told that Mr Hill intends to replace the hedge with a fence and a new hedge will be planted in the Spring. District Cllr Mrs Tomline said that officers of the Council have re-assured her that action will be taken if the landowner fails to do this.

c. Nigel Bassett-Jones of Wheatley Road said that he did not feel that the village had been properly consulted about the proposed traffic calming measures. The Chairman explained what procedures had been followed and Cllr Turner gave Mr Bassett-Jones details for contacting the County Council so that he could attend and speak at the Committee Meeting on 22nd December if he wished.

Mr Bassett-Jones asked if the Council had considered other methods of slowing the traffic and pointed out that the pavement in parts of Wheatley Road is so narrow that there have been instances when pedestrians have been struck by the wing mirrors of passing cars. Cllr Turner agreed that this is a very serious matter and the Chairman commented that the Council has tried in the past to have a BT pole removed from one particularly narrow part of the pavement but without success.

3 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 16: Garsington Opera: Noise moni+oring report from SODC. This is due to his employment by the artist in residence at Garsington Manor in 2001.

4 Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th November 2005

The Minutes were approved and signed as a true record. The Council noted that the current Minute Book is nearly finished and agreed that in future it would keep its Minutes in a loose leaf folder.

5 Matter Arising from the Minutes

The Chairman said that he has not yet received a reply to his letter to John Palmer.

6 County Councillor’s Report

County Cllr Turner said that he had discussed the problem of parent parking outside the school with Mr Brassington and the head teacher agreed that he would continue with his attempts to put a stop to this.

Cllr Turner confirmed that the County continues to oppose suggestions that houses should be built on the land south of Grenoble Road.

He has asked Brian Short about repairs to the rails alongside the high path in Southend . Recent work in the area by contractors on behalf of BT has put the area in a worse state than before. Councillors are concerned about the safety of the bank, part of which slipped several years ago. It was thought that the bank had stabilised but Cllr Turner said that he would get the County Engineer to revisit the site and make a new appraisal. It was pointed out that this site lies within the Conservation Area and any opportunity to improve its amenity value should be taken.

Cllr Turner assured the Council that the County’s new enforcement officer would monitor the situation with the scrap yard in Pettiwell and take appropriate action if the business undertook activities for which there is no planning approval.

Cllr Turner asked that the Council take an active role in the current bus consultation process. It was unlikely to be worthwhile for a representative to attend the meeting in Abingdon on 14th December but it was important to try and disprove the contention that hardly any passengers from Garsington use the route 49 service. Cllr Baker commented that this bus frequently runs several minutes early and so potential passengers are lost.

7 District Councillor’s Report

District Cllr Ann Tomline said that the new covert camera designed to catch fly-tippers has to be mounted on a post, which will severely limit the scope for its operations. The dial-a-ride bus service has been cut as part of the savings required to pay for free bus travel for all pensioners and other qualifying persons. The future of the concessionary fare tokens will be decided by the Council in January.

The composting scheme using paper sacks collected on request has not been well used and was therefore very expensive on a cost per ton recycled basis.

Trials of the webcasting of meetings have started and the service is intended to start fully in the new year; the shortage of enforcement officers continues.

8 Finance and cheques for signature

The Council’s bank balances were as follows:

Bank of Ireland balance at 7th November: £117,823.41 (interest £424.56)

Barclays current a/c balance at 30th November: £9,620.25

Newsletter advertising receipts for the month totalled £250

The following cheques were approved for payment:

Biffa Waste Services Ltd £96.40

Southern Electric £17.60

Clerk’s salary £313.12

Admin expenses £89.75

Positive Tree Care £250.00

Potters had been unable to provide a competitive quote for the mower servicing. Two other contractors have been suggested and, in view of the sums involved, the Clerk has been asked to contact them both.

The Council approved the Statement of Accounts and the Statement of Assurance for the Annual Return, both of which were signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

The Council agreed that it was important that a new mandate is lodged with the Bank of Ireland as soon as possible.

The Clerk asked if the Council would like him to approach the Village Hall Committee to seek repayment of the monies that the Parish Council had paid out on the Committee’s behalf. This was agreed.

9 Planning

a. Applications

P05/W0616 amendment, 15 The North Manor

Demolition of existing outbuilding and erection of two storey side extension amended to include provision or patio doors

The Council had no objection to the amended details

P05/W1130 21 & 23, Wheatley Road

Erection of one three bedroom detached dwelling and three garage block. Alteration of first existing access and closure of second

The Council considered that this application should be approved as a well-designed and well-conceived plan

b. Decisions and other Planning matters

No decisions have been received this month

10 Correspondence to Chairman and Clerk

a. Concessionary fares; The Council would like to see the tokens scheme continue especially in those areas where the bus services are poor or even non-existent and also where a bus service may exist but operated with buses that are not suitable for use by disabled persons.

b. Electoral roll: the Council noted that the number of electors in the village at the beginning of December 2005 is 1383 compared with 1384 in 2004

c. Free trees; it was agreed that the Council would not ask for any new trees this year but will hope to obtain some next year for planting on the land off Oxford Road.

d. Youth services; Woodcote Parish Council has written asking for support in its campaign to get the County to increase its Youth Service provision. This is not a priority for Garsington but the Clerk was asked to write to the Leader of the County Council in support of Woodcote PC.

e. St Mary’s Church Restoration project; Mike Rothery, Church Warden, has written to the Chairman advising him that the Church is seeking £200,000 for major restoration work to the fabric of the building. English Heritage has indicated that it will make a substantial grant but there remains a need for funds to be donated by local residents and organisations. It was agreed that the Council should review what funds could be donated under its discretionary powers and the matter should be raised again at the February Council meeting.

f. Wheatley Park School; the Chairman has received a letter thanking the Council for its recent donation.

11 Land off Oxford Road

The Clerk confirmed that the Planning Application for change of use has recently been submitted.

The Council agreed that it wished to find some way in which it could bind future Parish Councils into an agreement that this land could not be used for housing. It was agreed that the Clerk should seek advice and, in the first instance, this should be from Edward Pilling & Co.

The Clerk confirmed that the Parish is entitled to assistance from a WREN grant and he has asked for application forms to be supplied.

12 Traffic Calming

The Rix family of Pettiwell has been in touch with Peter Ronald seeking traffic calming in Pettiwell. Mr Ronald has ruled this out in the near future but the Council agreed that after calming measures have been installed in Oxford & Wheatley Roads, the impact of these measures upon traffic n both Pettiwell and Southend should be studied. For this purpose the County will be asked to do ‘before and after’ traffic analysis.

The Clerk confirmed that Cllr Paul Bolam has been registered to attend and speak at the County’s committee meeting on 22nd December. A substitute representative will be permitted if necessary.

13 Affordable Housing

Several residents had attended the exhibition in advance of the meeting. There will be another opportunity to view and discuss the options before the January meeting.

The Clerk has received a letter from Savills on behalf of Christ Church Oxford who own Kiln Farm. Cllr Bolam confirmed that Suzanne Willers has sent Savills a copy of the affordable housing needs survey.

14 Village Maintenance

a. Rob Jeffrey has not completed the schedule of work at Kings Copse and the Clerk was asked to contact him about this delay.

b. Cllr Shuker will talk to the landlord of the Three Horseshoes about placing the pub’s advertising signs with more consideration for pedestrians, especially the disabled. The Clerk will ask SODC to advise what regulations cover the use and deployment of temporary advertising boards.

c. Pete Ronald says that permission is required to erect bollards or similar on the green at Pettiwell. He has requested details of what is proposed but the Clerk was asked to find out whether there are already any standard guidelines about such barriers, covering such matters as their colour, size, height, distance from main carriageway, distance apart, illumination etc.

d. Work on cutting the perimeter hedge at the Play Area has started but is not yet complete. The sports field itself will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

e. Cllr Bolam said that he would prepare a list of all stiles in the village where maintenance is required and copy this list to the Garsington Society.

f. The Clerk confirmed that he has circulated a letter about not parking on the grass to all residents on The Green. He was asked to find out if regular parking on a particular piece of ground over a period of years could ultimately result in the gaining of any permanent rights of occupation.

15 Garsington Opera

The Chairman left the room while the following item was discussed

The Council noted that consultants have prepared a report for SODC after monitoring the sound levels at the opera and surrounding areas of the village. The detailed report will be circulated to councillors. No further action is required.

16 Village car parking

A new supply of ‘Pavements are for people’ stickers has been received. The Chairman asked for more. There are several parts of the village where vehicles are parked in what are thought to be locations which are dangerous to other road users. The Chairman has commented upon this in the Newsletter and individual residents will be written to if the problem persists. The advice of the Police road safety team will be requested.

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm