Garsington Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Monday 6th February 2006 commencing at 7.30 pm.

The Chairman, Councillor Godfrey Eden, presided; present were Councillors David Baker, Paul Bolam, Anne Eastwood and Gurdip Saini with G Russell in attendance. Also present were County Cllr David Turner, District Cllr Ann Tomline, three residents of the Parish and PC Brian Price from Thames Valley Police.

1. Apologies for Absence were accepted from Cllrs Cliff Moss who is unwell and Cliff Shuker who is away.

2 Public Participation

a. Two residents raised issues to do with roadside matters, complaining about the amount of litter that is left on verges and in ditches; overgrown vegetation; and damage and/or vandalism to several road signs. The Chairman agreed that many signs are in need of repair and that the matter should be reported to the County Council. Some residents are very good about tidying up litter but many are not and the Chairman said that he would mention this problem in the next Newsletter. District Cllr Mrs Tomline said that she would ask the District Council to send in one of their maintenance teams.

b. In response to an enquiry about heavy goods vehicles, County Cllr Turner said that the traffic survey has not yet been done.

c. Thames Valley Police; PC Brian Price said that there is a vacancy for an area beat officer following Constable Prybble’s promotion to Sergeant. Inspector Dunbar has asked Constable Price to look after things for the time being since there has been a increase in local crime, especially that of criminal damage, although the clear-up rate of violent crimes, has been good. Community Support Officers are now visiting Garsington, Horspath and Wheatley on a regular basis and more will be recruited. Some parishes are combining together to fund these appointments.

The Clerk was asked to find out if monthly crime figures could be obtained even when the Police are not present at the monthly meeting.

3 Declarations of Interest:

None

4 Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th January 2006

These were approved and signed as a true record after an amendment was made which made it clear that the agreement to make a donation of £5,000 to the St Mary’s Church appeal in 2006/7, as well as in the current year, is a firm commitment.

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. Cllr Bolam confirmed that the planning officer has now visited all the sites that had been identified as possible locations for affordable housing.

b. The Clerk said that when the Memorial Playing Field account was referred to in the cash book recording the March 1993 accounts, it had a balance of more than £700.

c. An estimate from R F Hayden for work on the Ransomes mower was more expensive than that from J J Bark and so Barks had been asked to do the work.

d. The detailed information about regulations concerning portable advertising boards has been received. Pavements are definitely not part of a business ‘forecourt’ and so signs are not permitted. If councillors would supply the Clerk with details of any suspected breach of regulations he would refer to the appropriate paragraph, but a copy of the manual would also be circulated to all for interest.

e. Kiln Lane barrier: the Clerk has spoken to Mark Sumner who told him that Thames Water have denied any responsibility. Mr Sumner says that the County has more urgent and pressing priorities for action to improve footpath safety, pointing out that in this location there have been no complaints other than from the Parish Council.

County Cllr Turner asked if there are any pictures showing the area before the barrier was damaged and Cllr Baker said that he would make some enquiries.

e. Mike Patrick has now been supplied with copies of the Village Hall architect’s invoices, which with the planning fee, come to a total claim of £11,778.75.

f. The Clerk has received details of the new bus timetables which will be circulated.

g. County Cllr Turner said that complaints about the unreliability of the route 49 service should be followed up. The contract will be reviewed in June 2007 so evidence that the service is still needed will be helpful.

h. It was explained that work needed on the railings along the high path in Southend involved replacing a section of missing rail rather than a break. District Cllr Mrs Tomline said that she thought the bank has slipped further and that prams etc could not easily be pushed through the reduced gap so it is in a dangerous state.

i. The Chairman said that John Palmer has still not responded to his letter.

6 County Councillor’s Report

David Turner said that the County has set an increase in its share of Council Tax of 4.38%. Social Services, Highways and the Library service will all have cuts in their programmes. A letter claiming that the County has increased its provision of services for young people is misleading since, by comparison with other counties, Oxfordshire’s spending per head of youth population is still very low.

7 District Councillor’s Report

Mrs Tomline described the new scheme for concessionary fares and tokens which will start in April although details of how it will be administered are not yet known. Cllr Tomline said that if it is still necessary for the Parish to have a local point of contact for distribution she is happy to continue to provide this service.

Cllr Tomline also reported that the District Council’s rate of Council Tax will be set later in the month; the Area Forums will no longer be supported by the County Council; she has received more information about the availability of discretionary rate relief for sports clubs; a new garden refuse scheme will come into effect in April; and the District Council has taken on the responsibility for the care of roundabouts throughout the District, which is to be funded by sponsorship.

8 Finance

a. Auditor’s Report - 2005 Accounts; the Council noted the auditor’s comment about the importance of the next annual return being made before 30th September. A notice will be posted advertising the conclusion of the audit and the availability of the accounts for public inspection.

b. Balances:

Barclays Current £8,611.08

Barclays Community £50.15

Bank of Ireland at 8/12 £118,586.44 (interest earned in the month was £401.50

The following cheques were approved for signature:

Rob Jeffrey £490.00

Colourplus (Dec/Jan Newsletter) £660.93

Southern Electric £16.86

BDO Stoy Hayward (Audit) £305.50

G Russell Salary £302.40

Admin £96.80

Petty Cash float £100.00

Thame CAB £250.00

Oxfordshire Ass. for the Blind £50.00

9 Planning

a. Application

P06/W0031 Field, Oxford Road;

Change of use from unused agricultural to Public Amenity use

This was unanimously recommended for approval as the proposed new facility will be a great benefit to the residents of Garsington.

b. Decisions and other Planning matters

The Council noted that due to an error in the original Ordnance Survey map used for the application to erect a detached dwelling at 21 & 23 Wheatley Road, the application has to be re-submitted and agreed that it would approve this application as being in principal the same as the scheme which it had approved before.

10 Correspondence to Chairman and Clerk

a. The Chairman said that he and another would try to attend the Reception for Parish Councils which is being held at County Hall on 15th March.

b. The County Council’s letter about improved funding for youth services and the District Council’s about the new garden waste service will be circulated.

c. Cllr Bolam agreed to respond to the Council’s Housing Strategy questionnaire.

d. Cllr Bolam reported that he has received an unsigned letter which questioned the validity of the statistics produced by the traffic survey.

11 Traffic Calming

County Cllr Turner confirmed that the budge for this scheme has been allocated.

12 Village Maintenance

The Chairman asked councillors to consider the options for setting a routine for the opening/closing of the Sports Club car park gates. Views on removing the stone wall by the old cross are also requested; would opening up the area be a good idea?

Cllr Saini asked for the sign indicating the post office in Elm Drive to be removed.

13 Village Hall

The next meeting of the Village Hall committee will take place on 20th February and the Chairman urged all councillors to attend. At the previous committee many of those attending had thought that he present hall should be ‘mothballed’ but it was thought that residents as a whole would not yet be aware of this.

14. Annual Parish Meeting

It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting would be held on Monday 8th May and would be followed by the monthly meeting of the Parish Council.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm