**Garsington Parish Council**

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Monday 4th July 2011 commencing at 7.30 pm. The Chairman, Councillor Godfrey Eden presided; present were Cllrs Anne Eastwood, John Hieatt, Mike Patrick, Judith Westgate and Chris Wright. Also present for part of the meeting were County Cllr David Turner, District Cllr Elizabeth Gillespie and three members of the public

7/11/1. Apologies for Absence

None; all Councillors were present

7/11/2 Declarations of Interest

None

7/11/3. Public Participation

Mr Gordon Roper said that he was concerned about the surface of some field footpaths in the village. This prompted several people to mention matters relating to paths and County Cllr David Turner suggested that a complete list of these issues should be compiled so that he could arrange a site meeting with the County Footpaths Officer at which the whole subject could be discussed.

Mrs McInerney asked if the Council knows anything about new houses (as opposed to converted farm buildings) being constructed at Kiln Farm. No information was available at the meeting.

Mr Cliff Moss told the Council that the site of the bus stop on Oxford Road is not ideal for passengers with mobility problems. He also complained about refuse bags being left by the shops in Elm Drive. He said that they are unsightly and could be a safety hazard in wet weather.

7/11/4. Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 6th June 2011

The Minutes as circulated were approved and signed as true record after the word ‘proving’ in Minute 6/11/7d was changed to ‘providing’.

7/11/5. Matters arising from the Minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda

a. The Clerk confirmed that he has received all returns for the Register of Interests.

b. Following the Council’s on-site meeting in the Burial Ground, it was proposed that a one-off payment to Ernie Tipping should be made for £100. This was agreed.

c. Following further correspondence concerning the advance payment for burial plots it was agreed that the matter should be placed upon the agenda of the August meeting.

d. County Cllr David Turner has asked County Highways to look into possibility of extending white lines opposite school.

e. Cllr John Hieatt confirmed that signage indicating the presence of the School crossing had been included as part of the original scheme.

f. With reference to the alleged breach of planning control in Tadpole Lane, it was reported that the land that has been rented is designated for agricultural use but it is being used for a non-agricultural purpose. District Cllr Gillespie said that she would take this up with Planning Control at SODC.

7/11/6 County Councillor’s Report

County Cllr Turner said that following a number of serious and fatal incidents across the county in recent days the County’s Fire and Rescue Service is urging drivers to take extra care on the roads.

Cllr Turner said that when the recent changes to the bus time-table had come in, it was part of a commercial tender submission. In these circumstances, proposed time–table changes were confidential – something that Cllr Turner thinks is a fault in the system. As a result of the recent campaign some changes to the time-table have been agreed but these will not take effect until September. The Garsington bus users group is to meet again on 20th July and Cllr Turner’s own group will meet again on 27th July. The lack of support for the late night service at weekends is very disappointing since the County already subsidises 15 other late night routes.

Cllr Turner said that when Peter Ronald had looked at congestion in Pettiwell he had concluded that safety would be improved if a ‘Slow’ sign was put on the road surface. If the Council wished there to be more fundamental changes – a one-way system, for example – the residents would have to be fully consulted and give their support.

Cllr Eastwood asked for the County to expedite repairs to the wall at Garsington House that had been damaged in a road traffic accident and for action to resolve the flooding problem on Clinkards Hill.

7/11/7 District Councillor’s Report

District Cllr Gillespie said that the Core Strategy document has been revised as a result of comments made by the planning inspector. The major change was caused by the inspector’s rejection of SODC’s attempt to include an allowance for windfall housing development against the quota. This had resulted in some housing projects having their quotas increased but Garsington would not be affected by this.

SODC had given a grant to the Village Hall refurbishment project.

The Chairman asked Cllr Gillespie to make enquires about a tree at 38 Poplar Close. It is causing a nuisance and the residents would like it to be removed; but SOHA has said that they will have to pay for this.

It was noted that the field next to Greenwoods was still not clear of rubbish and there is now an alleged planning breach involving a new access. District Cllr Gillespie will take up these matters with officials. Cllr Wright pointed out that one of the original planning conditions was that the whole operation should be screened from view.

7/11/8 Finance

The Council’s Bank Balances were:

Barclays Current Account at 30th June £6,950.95

Barclays Tracker Account at 10th June £50.98

Bank of Ireland at 6th June £40,063.62

Bank of Scotland (fixed deposit at 2.2% matures September) £50,548.34

The following cheques were approved for payment:

SODC (Building Regulations for Village Hall) £1,080.00

ColourPlus (June/July Newsletter) £831.21

Internal Audit & Compliance Ltd £222.00

Pear Technology Services (annual support fee) £60.00

Admin (June) £106.24

G Russell (Clerk’s salary) £369.69

Positive Tree Care (trees in Burial Ground) £200.00

An appeal has been received from St John Ambulance asking for a donation. This will be considered at the next meeting. The Clerk was asked to produce a schedule of the Council’s donations in recent years.

The Internal Auditor has made a number of recommendations.

1. The term ‘Honorarium’ should no longer be used and there must be supporting paperwork in the form of an invoice from those people who receive these payments, the implication being that the recipients, rather than the Parish Council, is responsible for accounting to HMRC for any tax that might be due.
2. This new practice affects Ernie Tipping, Trevor Woodington and Cyril Tomline.
3. By contrast, the rules for the payment of Parish Clerks mean that the Clerk’s salary should now be subject to PAYE and that he should have a contract of employment. HMRC has issued some notes on this matter, which the internal auditor has supplied for study. His further assistance is available
4. Another point raised by the auditor concerned payments by direct debit. Only one supplier uses this method. Now such payments do not appear in the minuted list of monthly payments and therefore there is no evidence that they have been approved. In future these payments should be minuted.
5. Standing Orders relating to Finance should be reviewed and updated where necessary.
6. Grass-cutting and insurance (items upon which the Council regularly spends more than £1,000): competitive quotes should be obtained every three years. The Chairman pointed out that on this basis the production cost of Garsington News should also be included in a regular review.
7. The Council’s Asset Register should be updated to comply with regulations (a sample has been supplied)
8. Year-end bank reconciliation should be signed by the Chairman as well as the Clerk.

The Council noted these recommendations and will take steps to implement them as soon as possible.

7/11/9 Planning

a. Applications; none received.

b. Other planning matters

Planning appeal – land adjacent St Mary’s Church

The Parish Council has been invited to comment. The Council agreed that in principle the Council would like this property to be developed. The location of the building is well back from the road. It will be important to specify the use of suitable materials. The views of the Council must be received by 3rd August. The wording to be used will be agreed with the Chairman.

7/11/10. Correspondence to Chairman and Clerk

a. PCSO Ken Cooney has asked if the Council has any issues of concern about local crime. Councillors mentioned that there have some recent burglaries and an act of vandalism in Tadpole Lane when vehicle tyres were slashed.

b. OALC is conducting a training day for parish councillors on Wednesday 12th October at the Civic Hall, Didcot from 10 a.m. – 3.00 p.m. SODC may be conducting training on the planning system in the near future. The Clerk will enquire.

c. The Council noted the Affordable Rural Housing Conference that is taking place at Stanton Harcourt on 11th July.

7/11/11. Burial Ground

Some tree work has already been carried out by Positive Tree Care. The same company has quoted £350 to remove a tree that is overhanging the Gizzel and it was agreed to accept this price. Information from Nicholson’s Nurseries about hedge plants was given to Cllr Patrick. Matters concerning reserving and making advanced payment for plots, distributing the regulations to undertakers and gravediggers and maintenance of specific plots will take place at the August meeting.

7/11/12 Play Area Repairs

A quotation for many repairs identified in the 2010 Safety Inspection report has been received from Safe & Sound Playgrounds of Aylesbury in the sum of £2,741. This compares with a quotation that included installing a new, low-maintenance surface below the aerial runway from Playground Supplies in the sum of £3,725.

It was agreed that Councillors would meet on site at 7.00 p.m. on Wednesday 6th July to discuss what repairs should be treated as a priority.

The Clerk will send to each councillor by email a copy of the 2010 RoSPA report.

7/11/13 Village Maintenance

The seat in the bus shelter opposite King’s Copse needs repair. Malcolm Hill will be asked to do this.

7/11/14 Sports & Social Club Lease

The Chairman said that progress had been made at a recent meeting when he, along with Cllrs Judith Westgate and Chris Wright, had met Tony Price, Clive Woodward and Cliff Moss. The Sports and Social Club had agreed to look at ways in which funds to pay an increased rental could be raised.

It was agreed that the contract for control of moles should be stopped as soon as possible. The Clerk will obtain an estimate for the value of the ride-on mower.

The Council confirmed that it was in agreement with the Playing Field’s use by the school and with the plans to create a hard-standing cricket practice wicket.

7/11/15 Village Hall Project

All applications made for grants have been approved and so the project can now move to the next stage.

The architect who has been working on the project has left the firm. The site has now been re-surveyed by others. More tenders have been requested and the start date for work to begin has been moved to 1st October.

The Council has so far settled four invoices for professional fees and the Building Regulations fee to SODC totalling £14,200 excluding VAT

7/11/16 Bus Services 101/106 and Kings Copse Bus Shelter

The report from Matthew Dovey had been circulated. It was noted that the Garsington bus users group is holding another meeting on 20th July.

7/11/17 Next Meeting

The Clerk was asked to add a discussion about the allocation of specific councillor responsibilities to the agenda for the meeting to be held on 1st August.

Meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.