**GARSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL**

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Monday 6th July 2015, commencing at 7.30pm. The Chairman, Chris Wright presided: present were Cllrs Anne Eastwood (Vice Chairman), Paul Bolam, Richard Betteridge, Mike Patrick, Judith Westgate with J Eden in attendance. Also present was District Cllr Elizabeth Gillespie and 13 members of the public

Chairman Chris Wright welcomed Cllr Paul Bolam and Cllr Richard Betteridge to the Parish Council.

7/15/1 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Matthew Dovey – Holiday

Cllr Ian Dickinson – Business

County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale – County Council Meeting

7/15/2 Declarations of Interest

None

7/15/3 Public Participation

Weeds on Footpath, Mrs Holmes spoke about the state of the footpath on the Wheatley Road, particularly the area between North Manor and Tadpole Lane, this was overgrown with weeds and nettles, also the long grass on the verges contributed to the problem, making walking on the footpath difficult, especially for children. Cllr Anne Eastwood said the footpath on The Hill also needed attention.

Mrs Holmes said she also wished to speak about the Planning Applications on the Agenda. Because a number of the public present wished to comment on the planning applications, Chairman Chris Wright agreed to move forward with the meeting and hear the comments when Planning was discussed.

7/15/4 Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 1st June 2015

Remove Cllr Anne Eastwood from opening paragraph, she was not present at the meeting on 1st June 2015.

7/15/5Matters arising from the Minutes not covered elsewhere on the Agenda

Grants - Chairman Chris Wright stated that he had spoken to officer at SODC and it would appear that grant applications could not be made until the autumn this conflicted with previous information provided. District Cllr Elizabeth Gillespie said she would get clarification and advise the Chairman and Cllr Bolam.

6/15/15 Community Plan

Chairman Chris Wright asked Cllr Patrick if the Village Hall Management committee had discussed solar cells on the Village Hall. Cllr Patrick reported that it had been discussed but not considered, as the Village Hall was in the conservation area.

Village Groups on Parish Council Website. Cllr Westgate said some progress had been made.

All other items raised were deferred as the councillors responsible were not present.

7/15/6 County Councillor’s Report

County Councillor’s report had been circulated.

All other matters would be deferred until the next meeting.

7/15/7 District Councillor’s Report

Greenwoods MOT sign.

District Cllr Gillespie said the sign should not be there, it was illegal and a criminal offence, the Enforcement Officer was dealing with it and she would arrange for a letter to be sent to Greenwoods and the Parish Council confirming that the sign must be removed immediately.

She pointed out that as the sign had been put there illegally the land owner was within his right to remove it. She also felt the land owner should be advised that he/she could also face criminal prosecution if the sign was not removed.

197 Oxford Road

Parish Council had received an email from the Enforcement Officer referring to his visit to the above premises. It was agreed that the resident at 195 Oxford Road should be forwarded a copy of the email and asked if he wished to make any further observations.

Cllr Patrick asked District Cllr Elizabeth Gillespie if it was possible to get some further rubbish removed from Elm Drive Shops; there was a bag of sand and a bag of salt that needed to be disposed of.

District Cllr Elizabeth Gillespie advised that SODC would be moving to permanent offices following the fire, the new offices would be at Milton Park and full details would be available shortly.

7/15/8 Finance

Barclays current account at 30th June 2015 £42,567.80

PC to note DD payment to Grundons for May £26.53

The following cheques were approved and signed

Go Ride £67.93 (subsidy contribution to weekend bus service)

BGG Village Grass cutting £457.50

Village Hall Hire March – June 2015 £59.50

Donation to Garsington Primary School 175th Anniversary Celebration £250

Southern Electric £17.54

HMRC/PAYE £93.60

Clerks Salary £278.54

Newsletter Editor £96.39

Internal Audit Report – discussion deferred until later in the meeting.

7/15/9 Planning

P15/S1660/HH 98 Southend

Erection of front extension and new porch, new dormer window to the front, removal of a chimney and 2 storey extension to the rear.

No Objections were raised and the application was approved.

P15/S1920/HH 48 Wheatley Road

Side and rear extension to form new Kitchen, Breakfast Room, Utility and En Suite.

Mrs Holmes whose lives on the other side of this semi-detached property, wished to express their concerns, firstly the houses were older than the date stated in the plans and the foundations were very shallow, the proposed basement therefore gave cause for concern, the properties also shared a chimney which was in the centre of the building and they had concerns about the proposed demolition of internal walls some of which appeared to be load bearing, the balcony at the rear also raised questions, whilst the proposal was not for a balcony that you could step onto she was concerned about privacy, the bedroom windows at the rear for both properties are situated very close together. Mrs Frazer who lived on the opposite side of the property stated that they also had concerns, the proposed extension would bring the property very close to the boundary between their two properties and the owners of 48 had already pointed out that it was possible that the excavation for the basement could undermine their garage, with the worst scenario being that it fell down.

Mrs Holmes said she had communicated with the Planning Officer, Gabriella Brown and had made representations on all the above points.

District Councillor Elizabeth Gillespie said she would speak to the Planning Officer about the structural issues and would contact Mrs Holmes.

Following this discussion the Parish Council felt that whilst they did not have any objections to the actual plans, the concerns raised by the neighbours should be noted in the response to the Planning Department.

P15/S1890/FUL The Green

Create a single family dwelling (Plot adjacent to The Green)

Mr Kelly wished to express his concerns about the modern building that was proposed, it was not in keeping with the surrounding area, this had originally been the garden of the Old School and as such would be more appropriate retained as a green area.

Mrs Jones agreed with this, she felt that we could not lose this valuable green space in the centre of the village.

The Chairman had also received a letter from Mr Townsend expressing similar views.

Chairman Chris Wright said that before this application was discussed further, he felt members of the public should be aware of actions taken in the last two years by the parish council, an attempt had been made to register the area as an Asset of Community Value this had been unsuccessful. The Parish Council had also spoken with the owners in an attempt to lease the land and turn it into a green space, whilst initial negotiations had been favourable the owners had subsequently rejected the idea.

The residents, who live at Ingram House which is situated next to the plot, were not totally opposed to the plan they thought it would be an improvement on what existed currently.

Cllr Eastwood stated that she strongly objected to this application. The centre of the village was in the conservation area and the proposal was not in keeping.

Cllr Patrick also felt that the application should be rejected.

Cllrs Bolam, Westgate and Betteridge agreed.

It was agreed that the planning application would be rejected by the councillors on the basis that the location was in the green belt and the development would have an impact on the openness of the green belt contrary to SODC planning policy. The area is one of the few remaining parts of the old village green and as such has strong connections for villagers. The proposed building is in the conservation area between two listed buildings, any development of the site would destroy the visual and historic context of the two listed buildings. The Parish Council believes the land should be classified as a non-designated heritage asset.

7/15/10 Correspondence to Chairman and Clerk

Ms Waud, who was present at the meeting, had emailed the Chairman regarding the verges outside her property, which were cut by the County Council. She had contacted the County Council and had been advised that the cutting of verges would only take place twice a year in July and December. Mr Stenning the County Council Area Steward had also advised Ms Waud that the County Council does not have a duty to keep private accesses safe.

She asked if the Parish Council would consider taking over the responsibility for the verges, the current situation was not acceptable, the verges played an important part in enabling pedestrians including school children to use them when necessary to avoid vehicles.

Chairman Chris Wright said unfortunately it was a problem throughout the village and many residents had cut the verges back themselves, sadly it was becoming more difficult to get any village maintenance carried out by the County Council due to budget constraints. Cllr Paul Bolam suggested that the Parish Council could look at the possibility of maintaining some verges in the future, this to be discussed separately, it would not however happen in the current financial period.

Winter Preparation

Clerk had received request from County Council regarding the supply of salt for the coming winter.

Currently all the salt bins in the village are full, further supplies at this time would not be required. Clerk will advise County Council

7/15/11 Playground

Proposed new play equipment for Poplar Close and the existing play area

Cllr Bolam confirmed that he had delivered letters to all the residents in Poplar Close asking for their views.

Play Area in Denton Lane

Cllr Bolam said there was a problem with the Aerial Runway, the Clerk had provided contact details for Playdale and this would be dealt with. He also said that the bark around this area needed weeding and then the bark would need to be raked, he would need assistance with this work.

Cllr Bolam raised the issue of the gates into the car park, on a recent visit to the play area the gates had been closed and locked mid-afternoon this could be a problem in the school holidays. Cllr Patrick said the gates used to be closed and locked by Mr Tipping this no longer happened. He would speak to his son in law who was now the Chairman at the Sports and Social Club.

Cllr Bolam asked the Clerk if she had managed to obtain the key for the waste bin in the play area. This had not been actioned but would be dealt with.

No further action on sourcing new equipment for either area had been taken at this time.

The Clerk advised that the ROSPA safety inspection was due did Cllr Bolam wish to be present when the inspection was carried out, it did incur an extra cost of approximately £35. Cllr Bolam said he would like to be present if possible and would email the clerk with the dates he was not available.

7/15/12 Village Maintenance

Trees and Hedges

Following on from the complaint received at the June meeting, residents had been contacted by letter asking them to cut back hedges around their property this had resulted in several residents contacting the council to advise that the hedges were outside the boundary of their properties and therefore not there responsibility. Many of the responses received did agree however that some areas were very overgrown and some action needed to be taken.

Mr Palmer and Mr Jeffery as a gesture of goodwill had cut back some of the vegetation at the junction opposite The Plough, although this hedge was outside their boundary fence. Many of the problems areas should clearly be maintained by the County Council, this was unlikely to happen and after much discussion and taking into account all the emails that had been received it was decided that the Councillors would arrange to walk the village, look at all the problems and discuss what action could be taken. Cllr Bolam agreed to organise this.

Phipps Well

The Clerk apologised this area had not been on the list discussed with the grass contractor, she had now arranged for them to visit the site and quote for the additional work.

Defibrillators

Clerk will chase British Heart Foundation re the grant application, will also obtain written quoteations for three defibrillators.

Badgers

Clerk had applied for the licence from Natural England, she had also asked Malcolm Hill if he was interested in quoting for the work that needed to be carried out in the burial ground to exclude the badgers. She had contacted BGG (grass cutting contractors) they were not interested in quoting but had given details of a possible fencing company, this to be followed up. Clerk asked the Councillors if they knew of anyone else she could contact. Chairman Chris Wright said he would contact BBONT and Cllr Betteridge said he would also make enquiries.

Kissing Gates

Tina Everett and David Mather had confirmed that work should commence shortly to get these gates installed.

Disabled Ramp at Elm Drive Shops

Following a meeting at the site, it was agreed that a ramp was possible on the side nearest the road. Chairman Chris Wright said that Cllr Dickinson was going to get some plans drawn. Clerk to chase this.

Mower

Clerk had contacted the suppliers, the mower had little value it was purchased in 2009 and would be valued between £15 and £75 depending on condition and whether it was a straight sale or part exchange. Cllr Bolam suggested it should be advertised in the Newsletter stating “best offer”. The Clerk suggested that perhaps Mr Tipping should be given the opportunity to purchase it first before it was advertised. Chairman Chris Wright said he was happy for the Clerk to deal with it.

7/15/13 Village Bus Service

No report

7/15/14 Policing/Speed Monitoring

Police report had been circulated.

PCSO Diana Greenwood had confirmed that they would be monitoring the parking around the school following a number of complaints from residents and handing out letters advising parents that safe parking was available at The Three Horseshoes.

District Councillor Elizabeth Gillespie left the meeting at 8.55pm

7/15/15 Risk Assessment

This was deferred for discussion at the next meeting.

7/15/16 Asset Register

Latest copy of the register had been circulated. Chairman Chris Wright said trees owned by the Parish Council should be listed.

Hawthorn Trees on The Hill, nominal value of £1.00

Trees in Combewell? Did these belong to Parish Council?

Trees in Parslers Piece? Value

Were there any others?

7/15/17 Any Other Business

Audit Report, the Internal Auditor had made a number of recommendations in his report.

Item B - Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to be reviewed annually. This needs to be actioned and formally minuted.

Item C – Risk Review to be undertaken annually and formally minuted

Item D – Change the way the annual budget is presented.

Item E - Recommended that the Council contact HMRC again at the new address in Newcastle. No response had been received to letter sent in 2014.

Item G – Recommended that the hours carried out in relation to the Newsletter are confirmed in writing and recorded in the Minutes. This was noted, hours had been agreed when the Clerk took over this responsibility and payment had been agreed at the current rate paid to the Clerk.

Item I - Recommendation that bank reconciliations be carried out on a more frequent basis.

Item J – It is recommended that supporting invoices are initialled by Councillors signing cheques.

This recommendation has been introduced.

Chairman Chris Wright said most of the items recommended were of a minor nature, he thought the current presentation of the budget was adequate, the Clerk said she did not have any problem with implementing the changes and would draw up an itemised list of actions that needed be dealt with annually to avoid problems in the future.

Trees on Bridle paths, the problems surrounding ownership of trees was discussed, particularly following the situation regarding the trees behind Poplar Close. It was agreed that bridleways are of value to the community. It was proposed that the Council should seek ownership of such land and Chairman Chris Wright asked Cllr Westgate to look into this.

Bus Shelter in Oxford Road – Cllr Patrick said this needed cleaning, he would organise a work party.

Church Walk, lower end into Oxford Road – Cllr Eastwood reported that Clive Woodward had now completed the work on this footpath and asked the Chairman to acknowledge this in the next Newsletter. The work had taken two days and had been more costly than originally stated, Mr Woodward had said he would meet any additional costs. Invoice had not yet been received for the original amount agreed.

Blocked Drains, Cllr Eastwood said the surface water drains in the road between 71 Oxford Road and Combewell were blocked. Clerk will advise the County Council.

Parslers Piece, Cllr Eastwood asked about planting Yellow Rattle in the wild area. Work to introduce this plant on Shotover had really made a huge difference to the wild flower areas by controlling the growth of grasses. Chairman Chris Wright said he would investigate further when and how Yellow Rattle might be introduced in Parslers Piece.

Meeting closed at 9.15pm