Garsington Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Monday 5th March 2007 commencing at 7.30pm. The Chairman, Cllr Godfrey Eden, presided; present were Cllrs David Baker, Paul Bolam, Anne Eastwood, John Hieatt and Cliff Shuker with G Russell in attendance and five residents.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Gurdip Saini and County Cllr David Turner who were both unwell and District Councillor Ann Tomline who was on holiday.

2 Public Participation

a. There were complaints from Mr Tipping about flooding on the junction of Wheatley Road and Denton Lane and also at 153 Oxford Road where a kerbstone is missing and, because the nearby ditch is blocked with hedge trimmings, floodwater, instead of escaping, is going into the house. Mr Tipping also mentioned that the drivers of some lorries turning into Greenwoods are damaging the roadside bank, with their passage impeded by cars which are frequently parked on Pettiwell rather than being driven into the site.

b. It has been suggested that the climbing frame in the play area should have a modern safety surface beneath it.

3 Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Bolam and Eastwood declared an interest in P07/W0042 Home Farm Cottages because the applicant is personally known to them. They would withdraw from the meeting when this matter was discussed.

4 Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th February 2007

The Minutes as circulated were approved and signed as a true record after Cllr Paul Bolam was confirmed as Chairman of the Affordable Housing Sub-committee.

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

i. War Memorial repairs. The Clerk said that a cheque for £850 has been received from the insurers and the repairs are in hand with completion due in a week or two.

ii Mr Small from SODC’s Planning Enforcement department has not yet responded to the Council’s invitation to attend a meeting.

iii. There had been no further problems with Elm Drive flooding but it was unclear whether the remedial work in Hazel End was complete.

6 Finance

Bank Balances

Barclays Base Rate Tracker at 8th December £50.39

Barclays Current Account at 28th February £8,176.68

Bank of Ireland at 5th January £124,087.41 (interest earned £492.68)

The following cheques were approved for payment:

Colourplus (Feb/March Newsletter) £670.40

Biffa Waste Services £99.75

G Russell (Clerk’s salary) £315.90

G Russell (Admin) £98.20

The Council confirmed the re-appointment of the Internal Auditor, Brian Rollerson, and noted his fee increase to £25 per hour – the first increase for five years.

The Council also confirmed the re-appointment of BDO Stoy Hayward as External Auditor for one year pending further review. The Council noted that the Basic Audit Fee will be £285 per year for next five years. It was £250.

7 Planning

a. Applications

(Cllrs Bolam and Eastwood withdraw from the meeting while the following matter was discussed)

P07/W0042 Home Farm Cottages, Southend;

Erection of new garages and garden room

The Council agreed to recommend that this application be approved.

PO7/W0062 Kiln Farm, Kiln Lane; (amended)

Change of use of barns to B1 (offices)

The amendment did not give the Council any reason to change its previous expressed opinion that the proposal should be refused.

P07/W0067 Lower Farm, Lower Road;

Two storey side extension

By a majority the Council agreed to recommend that this application be approved.

b. Decisions and other planning matters

PO6/W0728 3 Oxford Road

The Council noted that the applicants have lodged an appeal against refusal to grant planning permission for a two storey front extension and conservatory to rear. The Parish Council has nothing to add to its previous comments which had recommended refusal on grounds of over-development.

South East Regional Housing Strategy Review

The Council noted that this review places much emphasis on affordable housing; the consultation period ends 27th April.

Minerals & Aggregates Review

The consultation period ends 23rd March. The Chairman will look at these papers but the Parish is some distance from the affected areas.

8 Correspondence to Chairman and Clerk

a. The Council noted the County Council’s notice of the temporary road closure of Station Road Wheatley: for 2 days from 24th March and for 14 days from 2nd April to allow gas main replacement works. The Chairman will place the notice on display in the Village Hall window.

b. The Chairman has received a letter from Mr Len Taylor expressing his concern about the dangers caused by parents parking near the school. This is something that the Parish Council has mentioned to the Police on numerous occasions.

c. Mike Rothery has written asking if the Parish Council would consider making a further donation towards the cost of repair work to the tower, roofs and guttering at St Mary’s Church. The Parish Council has donated £5,000 in each of the past two years and could not consider making a further donation until the 2007/8. In the meantime the Clerk will ask Mr Rothery to supply more information about the project costs and the source and amount of other funds raised to date.

d. Sally Gibson has written to the Chairman suggesting that the Parish Council should consider making a civic award to Trish Stableford for all the work that she does clearing Oxford Road and the adjoining ditches of rubbish and dumped items. It was agreed that Cllr John Hieatt should research the possibility of presenting a ‘thank-you’ pin or similar decoration.

9 Sub-committee reports:

Village Hall project; The consultation document has been prepared for printing and distribution to every house in the Village. In addition to the information contained within the leaflet there will be an open exhibition of the plans at the Sports Club on Saturday 17th March. All voting forms are to be returned by 24th March so that the result can be known a few days before the deadline for submitting an application to SODC for a capital grant. The project costs will also be assessed by a qualified quantity surveyor since this information will also be required for the grant application which must be submitted by 31st March.

Affordable Housing; Cllr Paul Bolam has been in contact with the new Housing Enabling Officer at ORCC. He will organise a meeting with her and the new planning officer at SODC in order that possible sites can be reviewed.

Green Belt threat; Chris Wright has been leading the contact with Elizabeth Gillespie of The Baldons and Martin Harris of Horspath.

10 Burial Ground Regulations

Cllr Shuker has circulated the latest revised version (reference 02/2007) for comment. Cllr Baker questioned the use of the phrase ‘upkeep of your grave’ but it was agreed to let this stand. Cllr Shuker asked Councillors to let him have any further comments by e-mail no later than 12th March. A copy will also be supplied to Ernie Tipping and a laminated version of the final document posted in the Burial Ground for all to see.

The survey of existing graves has highlighted a number which require attention in order to make them conform to the regulations. Cllr Shuker will draft the appropriate letters and discuss the matter again with Rev Richard Cowles whose assistance will also be required in supplying family contacts and addresses.

Cllr Shuker’s survey had not included ashes plots but this will now be done.

11 Village Maintenance

It was agreed to purchase two bins for dog waste. These will be green and positioned by the shops in Elm Drive and at on Kiln Lane – the exact sites to be agreed with the contractors and by reference to underground services. The bins will cost around £165.00 each and the regular cost of weekly emptying (arranged through SODC) will cost £72.50 per bin per year.

The amount of litter on and by the road outside the entrance to Unipart – i.e. outside the Parish boundary – is a disgrace. The Clerk will contact the City Council.

Mr Waters had asked about work to the trees outside 31 Combewell. The Council had approved expenditure on two trees in July 2006 but had not so far been invoiced by the contractor. Has the work actually been done?

It was agreed that the Council’s policy with regard to fallen trees, as long as they were not causing an obstruction or dangerous, should be that they be allowed to lie where they fall thus providing habitat for wildlife.

12 Playground repairs

The schoolchildren have been asked to make their suggestions by the end of this term. In the meantime J A King of Warborough, who had provided the cheapest quote of £1,100, would be asked to clean and repaint the swings, slides and climbing frame.

13 Land off Oxford Road

Cllr Shuker and the Clerk will be meeting the contractors on the following day to establish the programme of work. The SODC grant award of £7,000 has been confirmed and all residents notified that a start date for the project is imminent.

14 Establishing a Local Transport Scheme

The Council’s intention to start a scheme will be publicised in the Newsletter in the hope of attracting volunteers to help. Contact will also be made with the organiser of the scheme at Chalgrove.

The Meeting closed at 8.59 pm