**GARSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL**

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Monday 2nd March 2015, commencing at 7.30pm. The Chairman, Chris Wright presided: present were Cllrs Anne Eastwood (Vice Chairman), Matthew Dovey, Ian Dickinson Mike Patrick, Judith Westgate with J Eden in attendance. Also in attendance were County Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, District Councillor Elizabeth Gillespie and four members of the public.

3/15/1 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Paul Bolam

3/15/2 Declarations of Interest

None

3/15/3 Public Participation

Mr Young raised the question of the grass-cutting quote for 2015/16 and asked what the quote was from the contractor who had been appointed. Mr Young pointed out that Young Brothers had cut the grass for many seasons and he raised concerns that the proper process had not been followed by the Parish Council regarding the appointment of a new contractor. Chairman Chris Wright advised Mr Young that proper process had been carried out and the quote for the whole village contract was £3,500 which was less than half of the previous costs under the old system of 3 separate contractors carrying out the work. The Clerk said that contractors had been advised earlier in the year in writing of the Parish Councils intention to obtain quotes for the total village grass cutting contract. They had also all been advised of the new contract arrangements for 2015/16 and thanked for all the work carried out in previous years. Cllr Anne Eastwood explained that the Council were the custodians of parish council funds and they needed show that they were getting the best value for money for each and every job undertaken. It was fully appreciated that Young Brothers had, over many years, undertaken village maintenance for the Parish Council. Mr Young handed back the keys to Parsler’s Piece and left the meeting.

Mrs Holmes raised the question of the Local Plan 2031 refined, she had received notification by email from SODC and wondered what the Parish Council planned to do. Chairman Chris Wright said this was on the agenda for discussion

3/15/4 Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 2nd February 2015

No matters arising

3/15/5 Matters arising from the Minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda

No matters arising

3/15/6 County Councillor’s Report

Clerk had given everyone a copy of the County Councillors report.

County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale told the meeting of the impending case review regarding the child sexual exploitation cases from 2012, the report would be published on 3rd March and the County Council press release would be available at 11am the following day. The County Council along with other agencies had received a damning review on the way in which it had handled the situation. Following the Bullfinch Operation many changes had been made by all the agencies over the last two years and this had resulted in the co-agency Kingfisher Team being set up.

She also reported on the latest announcement that the CEO would not be made redundant as previously reported, although it is likely that a further review of this position will take place in the future.

Extension of pavement at Wheatley Road/The Hill junction, County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay- Gale was pleased to report that the Area Steward, Keith Stenning had been able to find funding of £6,500 towards the cost of this work, it did mean that the £450 she had offered previously would now be withdrawn. It was hoped the work would be carried out in the next three months and formal notice of the funding would be notified to the Parish Council. Chairman Chris Wright thanked the County Councillor for all her help in obtaining this funding.

County Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale left the meeting at 7.50pm

3/15/7 District Councillor’s Report

District Cllr Elizabeth Gillespie, said that although some staff were still working from home, every effort was being made to find suitable premises following the fire at Crowmarsh, most of the services were now back to normal, planning was one of the areas that was still affected, but it was hoped this would be resolved over the coming weeks.

District Councillor Elizabeth Gillespie reported on the latest Local Plan 2031 refined.

In the main the detail had remained the same as the previous report, SODC are still querying the number of houses planned for this area and protecting the Green Belt was still a priority. SODC were carrying out an independent Green Belt Study, at the present time they did not have plans to carry out a Full Review.

3/15/8 Finance

Barclays Bank, current account at January 2015 £41,747.14

Council noted the DD payment to Grundons for January £66.18

Notification had been received of Precept £10,500

Notification had been received of Parish Grant £776

Cheque had been received from BT Openreach £762

Newsletter Advertising £60

The following cheques were approved and signed

Young Brothers £6,180.00

Village Hall Hire Jan-March 2015 £51.00

HMRC/PAYE £93.60

Clerks Salary £278.54

Newsletter Editor Feb/March £96.39

Invoice had been received from Go Ride for the 12 month period commencing April 2015, for the service subsidy agreed by Parish Council in February. Clerk to see if possible to pay by direct debit.

3/15/9 Planning

None

3/15/10 Correspondence to Chairman and Clerk

1. Email from Mr Surman, regarding wall behind bus shelter at The Plough and possible misuse of village hall refuse bins. The Clerk had already responded to Mr Surman regarding the village hall refuse bins which had not been inappropriately used. Chairman Chris Wright would respond to Mr Surman regarding the wall behind the bus shelter.

2. Email from Barry Ruffels regarding the Badgers in the Burial Ground. Clerk would respond.

3. Election Guide. Clerk to circulate to all Councillors

4. Green Belt Study. Cllr Anne Eastwood and Judy Westgate had attended the first meeting, which had been somewhat confusing. Cllr Anne Eastwood was not sure what benefit would be gained from having a Neighbourhood Plan as matters would still need to be referred to Planning. District Cllr Elizabeth Gillespie disagreed, in her view it was a very worthwhile consideration. Chairman Chris Wright has already prepared a response for the initial evidence gathering and future meetings of the workshop are being planned by the District Council.

4. Local Plan 2031 refined. The reference to traveller’s sites in this report was discussed, the latest report still includes the temporary sites in Kiln Lane. Cllr Matthew Dovey is preparing a response from the Parish Council on this particular aspect of the report. Residents who responded to the first issue of the local plan 2031 have been advised by the District Council of the refined version, at the present time, until the situation becomes clearer a public meeting for residents would not be arranged.

5. Neighbourhood Plan Conference. Cllr Matthew Dovey said he would be interested in attending, it was agreed that the Clerk would respond noting the Councils interest.

3/15/11 Playground

This was deferred until the next meeting.

District Cllr Elizabeth Gillespie advised that grant applications could now be prepared and submitted to LEADER. Chairman Chris Wright said he would speak to Cllr Bolam to get the process started.

3/15/12 Village Maintenance

1. Defibrillators. District Cllr Elizabeth Gillespie advised that the grant application had been successful. Clerk will speak to British Heart Foundation to obtain formal quote and find out what additional funding might be available.

2. School Crossing. It was agreed that this project should go ahead and the Parish Council would finance the amount over the £6,500 that Keith Stenning from the County Council had agreed to pay. Chairman Chris Wright will write to Mark Francis the Highway Safety Officer to clarify some of the items on the proposed plan.

3. Badgers. A meeting had taken place at the Burial Ground between the Clerk and the Officer from Natural England. The new officer was much more sympathetic to the problems and suggested that perhaps the best way to proceed after the end of the breeding season was to cover the bank below the burial ground with small mesh chain link fencing, to prevent the badgers returning to the setts. It would need to be secured at the top and bottom of the bank, she suggested that at the bottom it should be sunk into the ground to a depth of at least six inches. A licence would need to be applied for in June to put in badger gates at the entrance holes in the burial ground and then after the 21 day period of the badger gates being situ the holes could be filled in with soil and rubble. She suggested that one of the jobs that could be done now was clearing the bank of brambles and vegetation to contain the growth. It was agreed that the Council would meet at the site on Saturday morning to view the extent of the problem.

4. Kissing Gate. Tina Everett was still seeking funding.

5. Planters outside the Plough. A letter had been received from the County Council stating that they had no problems with the planters remaining in place.

3/15/13 Community Plan

Chairman Chris Wright said that action to implement a number of the principle actions outlined in the Plan had already been started.

a) A date for the meeting with the Sports Club had been agreed.

b) Play area in Poplar Close was currently under review.

Cllr Matthew Dovey was asked if the implementation and monitoring group had now been appointed, he responded that this was still under review.

Chairman Chris Wright said that moving forward the Plan should be put on Agenda for review on a quarterly basis to try and ensure that targets were met within the timescale outlined in the plan.

3/15/14 Village Bus Service

Cllr Matthew Dovey reported that a meeting had recently taken place with Thames Travel to review the service, Thames Travel talked about a number of proposals to try and make the service more profitable, these included reviewing the timetable and possibly reducing the number of buses during the day, another suggestion was to reduce the number of buses during the commuter period from three to two. It was also suggested that the Saturday service be reduced to two hourly, rather than the hourly service currently in place. It was felt that none of these options was really feasible, often the buses were overcrowded and reducing the service would not solve this. It was reported that usage over the last few periods had increased and one of the possible solutions was to increase the fare, with the timetable remaining the same. Thames Travel was currently talking to the County Council to establish what subsidies, if any, might be available for the morning bus between Watlington and Oxford. A further meeting was planned.

3/14/15 Policing/Speed Monitoring

Police report had been circulated.

Speed Indicator Device. Cllr Matthew Dovey had sent a report on speeds recorded since the SID had been activated in Oxford Road. Cllr Matthew Dovey said he would like the SID to remain in this location until the end of April. Other suitable sites would need to be established throughout village and assistance would be required with moving the machine.

3/15/16 Any Other Business

Chairman Chris Wright and Cllr Ian Dickinson both raised the LED Sign that had appeared at Greenwoods. District Cllr Elizabeth Gillespie said she would investigate if permission had been obtained.

Cllr Anne Eastwood said that Clive Woodward was happy to carry out the work needed at the bottom end of the Church Walk footpath to try and improve the surface, he had advised that 3 loads of hard core would be required, which he was able to obtain. An expenditure of £150 was agreed. Clerk will write to Mr Woodward.

Garsington sign by Buildbase needed attention due to damage. District Cllr Elizabeth Gillespie said she would deal with this.

Clerk advised that a new Minute Book needed to be purchased at a cost of approximately £95, it was agreed that the Clerk would research and see if a cheaper alternative could be sourced.

The Meeting closed at 9.15pm