**GARSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL**

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Monday 7th October 2013, commencing at 7.30pm. The Chairman Chris Wright presided: present were Cllrs Anne Eastwood (Vice Chairman), Paul Bolam, Matthew Dovey, Ian Dickinson, John Hieatt, Mike Patrick, Judith Westgate with J Eden in attendance. Also present were District Cllr Elizabeth Gillespie, County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, Keith Stenning OCC Area Steward, David Clack OCC Area Steward and 6 members of the public.

10/13/1 Apologies for Absence

None

10/13/2 Declarations of Interest

None

10/13/3 Public Participation

Chairman Chris Wright welcomed the members of the public and Keith Stenning, Oxfordshire County Council Area Steward. Mr Stenning was accompanied by David Clack who is also an area steward and for a temporary period will be replacing Mr Stenning and looking after the South of the County, while Mr Stenning is seconded to the Vale.

Mr McDowall raised the following issues, speed of traffic on the Oxford Road, blocked road drains which increased the risk of flooding, both items would be discussed when they came up on the agenda. He also wished to speak on the Planning Application for Ruffels’ Cottage, Chairman Chris Wright suggested this could be done when the applications came up under Planning on the agenda.

Mr Eden raised an on-going issue with the County Council regarding the flooding that occurred at his property from rain water running off the highway. He gave the Area Steward details and the reference number that had been issued by OCC. David Clack agreed to review the situation and contact Mr Eden regarding this outstanding problem.

A resident brought up the problems of the state of the road surface in Kiln Lane, his understanding was that this would be maintained, some of the pot holes were now very large and he wished to know what action would be taken. Cllr Anne Eastwood said that her understanding was that if the planning application for the development of the Farm on Kiln Lane into offices had gone ahead, part of the planning requirement was for the lane to be maintained, however, the farm was now in private ownership. Keith Stenning said that as far as he was aware this was classed as a bridleway and as such it only needed to be maintained to a standard suitable for Pedestrians and Horses. It was agreed that District Cllr Elizabeth Gillespie would look at the Planning Application relating to Kiln Farm and see if any conditions had been attached regarding Kiln Lane and report back.

10/13/4 Oxfordshire County Council Area Stewards Keith Stenning and David Clack

1. Traffic Issues - details of the latest speed survey carried out in Oxford Road had been circulated. Keith Stenning explained that the average speed of the 85th percentile was calculated at 35.5mph and this was not considered a significant issue. Cllr Matthew Dovey raised the earlier speed survey that had been carried out higher up the hill which showed a higher average speed. Keith Stenning pointed out that the Parish Council had not been happy with the placement of the monitoring device higher up the hill and a new survey had been requested, the results of the latest survey were the figures that the County Council used for calculating average speeds. Cllr Ian Dickinson pointed out that speeding is an issue throughout the village and the introduction of speed humps in some areas of the village had done little to change this, most vehicles just straddled the speed cushions and did not reduce their speed.

Cllr Matthew Dovey asked about the sign as you leave the village on the Wheatley Road “Thank you for driving carefully” is approximately ½ mile before the end of the 30mph limit. Keith Stenning advised that this was the responsibility of SODC. District Cllr Elizabeth Gillespie said she would investigate and report back. The sign needs to be relocated from present position to end of speed limit.

Keith Stenning said that one of the most effective measures for reducing speed was parked vehicles.

It was agreed that new 30mph roundels would be put on all roads into the village at the beginning of the 30mph restriction, it was also agreed to put “Slow” on the hill in Oxford Road. County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale agreed to pay for this work from her allocation of funds. Keith Stenning also agreed and Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale agreed to pay for white lines to be painted at the bottom of the hill on Oxford Road

Regarding the flooding issue raised, the easiest way to report any problems was to call 0845 310 1111 and report the problem

2. Footpaths within the Village – Keith Stenning said that a footpath at the top of Pettiwell had been raised on numerous occasions, previously the answer had been no, there was no change to County Councils views on this.

3. Steep Footpath adjacent to the Village Hall – The Area Steward and the County Councillor had looked at this problem, because of the gradient Keith Stenning felt that there was little that could be done to improve this, measures had clearly been taken to prevent anyone going into the road with the installation of the railings. If steps were put in you would have an issue with wheelchair and pushchair access. Cllr Mike Patrick said he would advise the Village Hall Management Committee.

4. Village Maintenance (grass cutting) covered by OCC. Keith Stenning showed the Council a map of the areas in the village that were maintained by OCC, he agreed to request a copy of the map and forward it to the Council to provide up-to-date details. The footpath adjacent to the School Grounds should be cut as part of this.

The hedges at Combewell had been cut back, however, Cllr Mike Patrick pointed out that the problem of the large trees overhanging residents houses and touching the roofs had not been addressed. Cllr Anne Eastwood pointed out that a few years ago residents had made a successful claim against the County Council regarding the maintenance of these trees and a substantial payment to residents had been made. Keith Stenning said that the team that dealt with hedge maintenance had specific height restrictions imposed due to health and safety regulations. He would speak to the team who covered tree maintenance and make sure that this issue was resolved.

Keith Stenning and David Clack left the meeting at 8.10pm

10/13/5 Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd September 2013

The minutes were approved and signed after the following amendments had been made,

9/13/6 should be County not District Councillor and it should read “was not in their remit to do so”

9/13/17 should read Freshers not Threshers

10/13/6 Matters arising from the Minutes not covered elsewhere on the Agenda

27 Elm Drive Cllr John Hieatt reported that he was in regular contact with the Planning Department regarding this application, he has been advised that no decision had yet been made, it was still a possibility that this would be referred to a full planning committee, SODC were fully aware of the resident’s concerns regarding this application.

Chairman Chris Wright had forwarded a copy of an email regarding the recommendations for the management of Parsler’s Piece to all Councillors. The recommendation was for immediate action to be taken to remove the marginal grassy borders by either strimming or mowing and the removal of the cut vegetation to an area in the corner of the site where it would eventually break down. Clerk to speak to Ian Young to get a quote for this additional work to be carried out as soon as possible.

The longer term recommendations for the management of the site will be on-going with the specific mowing times being factored into the grass cutting schedule for next year. The younger Ash trees at the north of the site are diseased and will need to be cut down. The mature Ash at the south of the site is not showing any sign of disease.

10/13/7 County Councillors Report

A copy of the County Councillors report had been circulated to all Councillors for information.

The County Councillor highlighted some of the issues in the report,

Park and Ride - introduction of charges at sites owned by County Council from November 2013 bring them in line with sites owned by City Council.

City Deal, this continues to give cause for concern and County Cllr Lorraine Lindsay- Gale would be interested to hear from residents how they feel about the prospect of large scale housing being developed at the Grenoble Road site. It was likely that a 6 week consultation process would begin in December/January and it was very important that she was made aware of residents’ views. It was agreed that residents should be encouraged to write to the County Councillor and this needed to be highlighted in the December/January Newsletter.

School Transport this will be discussed by the County Council in November, discussions will commence on 4th November and will close on the 20th December. It is hoped this will give all those potentially affected the opportunity to respond.

10/13/8 District Councillors Report

City Deal – South Oxfordshire District Council is working very hard to defend the Green Belt and keep Grenoble Road from being identified as a dedicated allocation site for housing.

District Councillor Elizabeth Gillespie as the Chairman of the LEADER group will be a member of the board putting forward the case for rural needs to the LEPs (Local Enterprise Partnerships), the body that Central Government are channelling the government subsidies through. DEFRA has indicated that LEADER groups should be heavily involved with the LEPs

County Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale and District Councillor Elizabeth Gillespie left the meeting at 8.20pm

10/13/9 Finance

Barclays Current Account at 30th September 2013 £33,459.77

Payments received in September

£444 Newsletter Advertising

Council to note DD payment to Grundon in August amounting to £49.03

The following cheques were approved for payment

Wheatley Park School – Donation for Prize Giving £150

Colourplus Oct/Nov Newsletter £814.76

Playsafety Annual Inspection £141.60

BDO LLP Audit £240

Southern Electric £17.26

South and Vale Carers Centre – Donation £50

Clerks Salary for September £344.60

Insurance- Chairman Chris Wright gave the Clerk and estimated cost for replacing the War Memorial if it was damaged. Cllr John Hieatt had also obtained a verbal quote for replacing the gates at the Memorial Playing Field which had been installed to commemorate the Queen’s Coronation if they were damaged. Clerk would write to Insurers and get a quote for insuring both of these items for impact damage.

Audit Report

Notice of the Conclusion of Audit for the period 2012/13 had been received. The Notice had been posted in both Parish Council Notice Boards for the statutory 14 day period giving electors the opportunity to inspect the accounts.

The Council had been circulated with a copy of the Audit Report and Recommendations

1. Accounting Statements not approved by 30th June 2013. The Council will ensure that in future years the accounting statements are approved and signed by 30th June following the end of the year

2. Risk Assessment

3. Financial Regulations

4. Employment Status

Cllr Paul Bolam had circulated a draft Risk Assessment for discussion and approval and the Clerk had given Councillors a draft copy of the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, all of the above items will be discussed at the November Parish Council Meeting

10/13/10 Planning

P13/S2805/HH and P13/S2806/LB Ruffels’ Cottage, 68 Oxford Road

Demolition of existing single storey rear extension and construction of new linked two storey rear extension.

Ed McDowall and Fiona Caldwell addressed the meeting outlining the reasons they were seeking planning permission to alter the Cottage. They wished to have improved living space for the family. The plan incorporated moving the kitchen, which is currently at the front of the house to the new rear extension and moving the bathroom, currently on the ground floor upstairs.

Cllr Anne Eastwood said she fully supported the application. The remaining Councillors did not have any objections to the application, however, it was a listed building and any criteria or recommendations proposed by the Conservation Officer would need to be adhered to.

P13/S2881/FUL College Farm, Southend

Replacement of existing wall to retained barn (amendment to scheme approved application P10W1889)

There were no objections to this application.

10/13/11 Correspondence to Chairman and Clerk

The Chairman had received an email from the Toddlers Group asking for assistance, there had been a drop in numbers and current funds were very low, but they wished to keep the group running and hopefully build up the numbers attending. The Council agreed to make a donation of £150, Chairman Chris Wright would advise them of the Councils decision and request details of where the payment should be made.

The Clerk had received a letter from Mr Palmer regarding the Old School Gardens, he had agreed in principle that the Leylandii needed to be cut back. He was currently discussing this with SODC because of the size of the trees, he could not provide a timetable for the work to commence.

OPFA (Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association) Renewal advice had been received, it was agreed that as the membership had increased to £50 and the Council did not really benefit from this membership apart from receiving the newsletters, it would not be renewed.

Cllr Mike Patrick had passed the Chairman details of a residents concern about the Shop Sign, which blocked the view for residents exiting from Kiln Lane onto the Oxford Road. A finger post sign had been in situ for some time now. Cllr Matthew Dovey agreed to speak to the owner and report back, in earlier discussions it had been agreed that when the finger post sign was installed the shop sign would be removed.

10/13/12 Playground

The annual report had been received. Cllr Paul Bolam was given the report and will action any remedial work that is required.

10/13/13Village Maintenance

Burial Ground, Chairman Chris Wright and Cllr Mike Patrick had visited the burial ground to assess the problems that had been raised, regarding the out of alignment graves and headstones in the last row of plots in the burial ground. Information on the monumental masons who had installed five of the latest headstones had been provided by Emma Pennington. Clerk will write to the Monumental Masons concerned asking for advice on this matter.

Cllr Mike Patrick asked for a working party to clean the Bus Shelter in the Oxford Road, Cllr Paul Bolam said he would organise.

Cllr John Hieatt asked about the maintenance of the bus shelter at Kings Copse it was very overgrown.

Cllr Mike Patrick spoke about the possibility of some bike racks being placed outside the railings at the Village Hall, there had been a recent problem with a bike being chained to the railings during the day, whilst the owner used the bus.

Cllr Mike Patrick had received a request from the Sports and Social Club for a Memorial Bench to be placed by the Club House. There were no objections to this, Cllr Patrick will advise the Sports Club.

Cllr Anne Eastwood raised the problem of all the ivy and vegetation that needed removing from the wall behind the Old Stone Cross. It was agreed that this needed attention, Cllr Anne Eastwood to circulate possible dates for a working party to carry this out.

10/13/14 Village Bus Service

Cllr Matthew Dovey reported that there had been some issues recently. A 35 seater bus had been used on the route during the busy commuter period, this had resulted in no further passengers being taken on board after the Red Lion, there were also issues with vehicle breakdowns and some buses not running due to staff problems. County Council have remonstrated with Thames Travel, it is hoped that a further meeting can be arranged with Thames Travel in November to discuss all of these issues.

There were no problems reported with the weekend service.

10/13/15 Community Plan

Cllr Matthew Dovey reported that the draft survey should be ready early next year. Once the survey had been agreed and formulated it would be distributed to every household. Analysis of the survey would be compiled by the County Council.

10/13/16 Community Assets

The Clerk would raise the necessary forms for submission to SODC for listing Old School Gardens on the Community Asset Register.

10/13/17 School Transport

For discussion at the November Parish Council Meeting

10/13/18 Policing/Speed Monitoring

The Council agreed that a request should be made to the Police for a mobile speed detection unit to visit the Village. Cllr John Hieatt said he would find out if there was a specific person the request should be raised with at Thames Valley Police.

10/13/19 Any Other Business

Cllr Judith Westgate said she had been in touch with Simon Escreet regarding Common Land in Garsington, he is happy to look at the areas and advise.

Chairman Chris Wright referred to the email from the Planning Consultant regarding Kiln Lane. It appears that may be possible to do something, particularly with regard to waste issue, it is necessary to establish what the exact content of the waste is and does it pose a threat to other residents in the area. Chairman Chris Wright will speak to District Councillor Elizabeth Gillespie about Kiln Lane and the SODC future plans for traveller sites, pressure needs to be applied on this.

Chairman Chris Wright raised the problem of the footpath sign by the White House in Kiln Lane, whoever has cut hedge has taken out stile and footpath sign. Clerk to ask Robert Surman if he knows who is responsible maintaining this hedge along the field adjacent to Kiln Lane.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT

BY LORRAINE LINDSAY-GALE

NOVEMBER 2013

TALKING OXFORDSHIRE EVENTS

The Leader of the County Council Ian Hudspeth has been holding a series of events across the county talking to local people about the increased budget cuts being imposed upon the council by central government.

In addition to the previous round of cuts, a further £61million has to be found over the next four years.

Together with Chief Executive, Joanna Simons and other County Councillors, Ian has been listening carefully to the concerns of local people because we are now at the stage where there simply are no easy options. Whatever is saved from one service, will have to be compensated for by a cut in another, and it is important that the people of Oxfordshire should understand this and be consulted.

The overall impression has been that a group protesting against the proposed cuts to the county’s network of Children’s Centres dominated the discussions at every meeting. While I can appreciate and sympathise with their concerns the Council has no intention of withdrawing support from the most vulnerable and needy young members of our society. It is a pity that other members of the public were on a couple of occasions drowned out and prevented from making their points of view heard.

A number of people wanted to know why OCC doesn’t just raise the Council Tax in order to stop the cuts. The problems here is that the Government has imposed a cap of 2% on tax rises, which would not be nearly enough. The penalty for going over 2% is an automatic referendum that would cost £500,000 to organize, and would most likely result in a ‘No’ vote since people are unlikely to vote for higher taxes.

Income generation, agile working, using reserves, amalgamating into one unitary authority, selling property, reducing road works, more use of volunteers, more private sector involvement, reducing street lighting and giving up the new government proposal for all young children to receive free school meals were all offered by residents as suggestions to offset savings. The County Council has, and is considering some of these ideas and others. I would be happy to hear from anyone in my Division if they think we may have overlooked something.

We have to set a budget by February. Whatever the decisions we eventually take, I would like to re-assure residents that we will protect our essential services, look after the most vulnerable elderly and young people in our county and meet our statutory obligations.