Garsington Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Monday 8th January 2007 commencing at 7.30pm

The Chairman, Councillor Godfrey Eden, presided; present were Councillors David Baker, Paul Bolam, Anne Eastwood, Gurdip Saini, Cliff Shuker and John Hieatt. Also present were County Cllr David Turner, District Councillor Ann Tomline, and four residents.

1. Apologies for Absence

None; all Councillors were present.

2 Public Participation

In response to matters raised by Mr Tipping it was explained that nothing has been done so far to provide road signs warning about the danger of horses; that Young Brothers have been asked to cut back the hedge around the play area boundary; that it is necessary to establish who is responsible for the removal of dead elms etc in various parts of the Parish and that residents will be consulted in advance about the expenditure of Council money on the proposed new Community Hall.

Mr Moss commented that throughout its existence the Sports Club has been staffed by volunteers and he asked if the enlarged premises would continue to operate in this way. The Chairman said that it was not yet known what the arrangement would be.

3 Declarations of Interest

None

4 Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th December 2006

After several typing errors were corrected these were approved and signed as a correct record.

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. The Clerk said that he had now made contact with the area engineer from Southern Electric and asked about the planting of a screening hedge around the electricity sub-station in Southend. He had been told that this would not be approved. Southern Electric believes that having a security fence which does not obscure the view of the equipment inside makes the installation less likely to be vandalised. The Council agreed to see if it could locate similar locations where a screening fence has been provided in order that an appeal can be made for Southern Electric to reconsider this matter.

b. The Clerk said that he is putting some information about the Pear Technology digital mapping software into the monthly circulation folder. He said that Chris Wright had contacted him about an alternative product.

c. Mr Tipping has been supplied with heavy duty plastic refuse sacks.

d. Cllr Mrs Tomline said that she had continued monitoring customer car parking at Greenwoods. She is also asking the District Council for its help in removing graffiti.

e. The Chairman said he will write to the County Council saying that the footpath sign to Scholarswell Farm, which was removed by an unknown person, need not be replaced.

6 County Councillor’s Report

County Cllr David Turner spoke about the recent flooding in the area around Elm Drive. He has been contacted by local residents and the County Council engineers have been trying to ease the problems caused. Recent ditch clearance may have helped the situation. Photographs which illustrate the current problems were given to the Clerk for scanning and sending to the County Drainage expert.

Residents told Cllr Turner that it seemed the rains have caused several new springs to become active. He will report this to the county engineers. It was also noted that ditch clearance in Pettiwell is not yet complete and that the drains at the junction of Denton Lane and Wheatley Road need attention.

Cllr Turner said that the County Council’s share of Council Tax is expected to increase by around 4.25%. Government grants have not been as large as hoped.

He commented on the Primary School Review. There were worries about the schools being ‘federalised’ across broad areas and said that the pastoral care given to the pupils of smaller schools is particularly important to retain.

Cllr Turner said that the decision about the closure of the bridleway across land owned by BMW has been postponed so that a site visit could be arranged and alternative routes studied in more detail.

The area traffic survey will take place on 6th June.

7 District Councillor’s Report

District Cllr Ann Tomline reported that the new SODC Planning Enforcement Officer, Tim Small, has visited 28 Wheatley Road and has instituted further action in respect of that property. Mr Small has indicated that he is prepared to attend a meeting of the Parish Council and it was agreed that the Clerk should invite him to do so.

Cllr Tomline said that planning permission for the enlarged community hall is about to be granted. If the Council wishes to apply for SODC grants to develop this project the applications must demonstrate that the project has popular support. She understood that the grant towards the project on land off Oxford Road would also receive approval soon. Cllr Tomline recommended that the Council writes to the Chief Executive of SODC asking that funds are provided to alleviate the flood problems recently experienced in the village.

Finally she said that SODC has applied for money to set up a system of advertising on the internet the details of properties available to let. Prospective tenants will be able to apply on line from libraries and other internet access points.

8 Finance

Bank balances were reported as follows:

Barclays Base Rate Tracker at 8th December £50.39

Barclays Current Account at 29th December £12,048.58

Bank of Ireland at 5th December £123,124.17

Bank interest earned in the month amounted to £435.29 and Newsletter advertising receipts to £380.

The following cheques were approved for payment:

Total Pest Control (mole control) £164.50

Wheatley Park School (donation) £60.00

G Russell (Clerk’s salary) £315.90

G Russell (Admin) £88.60

Village Hall Room Hire £135.00

Young Brothers (annual grass-cutting) £2,820.00

Young Brothers (path clearance) £35.25

C Shuker (expenses for play area repairs) £13.88

9 Planning

a. Application:

P06/W1280/RET The Plough Inn, 1 Oxford Road; Covering existing patio area with wooden decking, erecting small decking area. (Retrospective)

The majority of Councillors were in favour of recommending that this application be approved.

b. Decisions and other planning matters

P06/1086, 3 Birch Road; Two storey extension to provide shower/utility room and bedroom over garage.

Planning permission refused as a ‘cramped and intrusive form of development’.

P06/W1107/LB Seven Bells Cottage, 93, Southend; Internal alterations and exchange fixed light for a new casement window with opening lights.

Listed building consent granted

PO6/W0512/LB & PO6/W0513 Hill Farm, Cuddesdon Road Chiselhampton (in the parishes of Stadhampton & Cuddesdon); Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of new conservatory.

The Council noted that the applicants have appealed against SODC’s refusal of planning permission but has no further comment to make.

10 Correspondence to Chairman and Clerk

a. War memorial damage; the Clerk confirmed that the company which owns the vehicle that caused the damage is going to pay for the repairs through its insurance.

b. The County Council has awarded the Garsington Society a grant of £300 for replacement of stiles and re-laying of paving slabs.

c. The consultation period for the County review of primary school provision has been extended until the end of the month. It is thought unlikely that Garsington Primary School will be affected but the chairman of governors is in contact with Cllr Eden.

d. The Council noted the invitation to the Chairman and one other representative of the Council to a reception at County Hall on Wednesday 28th Feb 6-30 – 8.30. A reply is required early in February.

e. Confirmation of the Footpath Modification order relating to the path joining The Hill with Oxford Road will be included in the Council’s monthly circulation.

f. The Council has received a letter from Post Office Ltd asking if there might now be a new venue for a post office. It was thought that the shop in Elm Drive might re-open at some point in the future but that, for the moment, there was no change. The Council noted that the absence of a post office made the provision of adequate transport services for the residents of Garsington an even more important matter.

g. Cllr Shuker said that he has sent his draft paper about burial ground rules and regulations to Rev Cowles and is awaiting a reply before the document can be finalised. It was agreed that the word ‘vicar’ should replace the word ‘incumbent’. All bereaved families and undertakers using the burial ground would receive a copy.

Cllr Shuker said that he will prepare a list of all the graves which do not conform with the regulations and describe the action needed so that they do conform.

11 Sub-committee reports:

Village Hall project

In view of the news about the granting of planning permission this sub-committee will be holding a meeting within the next two weeks.

Affordable Housing

Cllr Bolam said that the planners have indicated that several sites within the Parish might be suitable but there has been little progress since Suzanne Willers left ORCC. A replacement for Suzanne has been appointed – the Clerk has details. Cllr Tomline said that the District Council is preparing its strategy for affordable housing.

Green Belt threat

The meeting held on 12th December had been attended by 106 people. Chris Wright has prepared a statement for the Examination in Public and all houses will receive a copy. So far the cost of photocopying has been paid by volunteers but the Council agreed that it would be responsible for meeting this expense in future.

Residents are strongly in favour of attending the EIP session in Reading Town Hall on 27th and/or 28th February commencing at 10 am. This is the key meeting for discussion about the Oxford Green Belt.

12 Transport Needs Survey – Results

The results of the survey had been circulated in advance. It was agreed that information about bus time tables should appear in every issue of the Newsletter. Alix Michaelis will be asked to attend a meeting of the Parish Council in the near future to talk about how a private scheme could be establish and, in the meantime, some literature about existing schemes will be circulated.

The overall conclusion of the Survey, which is that Garsington has a proven need for the existing bus service with more services demanded in the evenings and at weekends, will be passed to the County Council.

13 Village Maintenance

Fallen trees need attention in several parts of the Parish including Guydens Farm and near The Manor. Malcolm Hill will be asked to remove the litter bin on the concrete post near the bus stop outside The Plough and to repair the down pipe on the shelter. Cllr Shuker has made this request already.

14 Playground repairs

A questionnaire relevant to future applications for Big Lottery funding was passed to Cllr Shuker for completion by the end of January. Cllr Shuker has installed a new seat on the aerial slide. Three painters are working on quotes and some welding work has been organised.

15 Oxford Road Site Grant Applications

The letter from TOE confirming the grant was passed to Cllr Shuker. News about SODC’s grant decision is still awaited.

It was agreed that Nicholsons Nurseries should be given approval to start work clearing the site and making it secure but should be told that until all the grant money is in place a ceiling of expenditure will be imposed. Prior to any work starting, however, all the immediate neighbours of the site should be told what is happening.

16 Village Flooding problems

Mr David Mather of Johnson Close has drafted a letter to SODC for Cllr John Hieatt to use about alleviating the flood problem. This has been sent to Mr John Backley in the Public Amenities Department. Four photographs taken on 6th January were passed to the Clerk for scanning and sending to the County Drainage Engineer, Gordon Hunt.

The County is reported to have spent £6,500 and the District Council £1,500 on measures to alleviate the flooding problem in early December but flooding is still taking place.

SODC’s consultants have advised that further work by SODC is necessary under its land drainage powers but this work has not yet been carried out. The Clerk will discuss this matter again with Gordon Hunt. If it is a question of SODC allocating more funds the Clerk will write to SODC’s Chief Executive asking that this is done.

17 Precept 2007/8

An increase of 2.8% was agreed which takes the precept for 2007/8 to £18,900.

The next meeting will take place in the Village Hall on Monday 5th February 2007

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm