#### Garsington Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Monday 7th July 2003 commencing at 7.30 pm

1. The Chairman, Councillor Godfrey Eden, presided; present were Councillors Paul Bolam, Anne Eastwood, Cliff Moss, Gurdip Saini and Ann Tomline with G Russell in attendance. Also present were County Councillor David Turner, Suzanne Gibbins from ORCC and 10 residents of the Parish

2. Apologies for Absence were received from Cllr John Goodey

3. Declarations of Interest: None

4. Public Participation

## a) Mr Ken Willbery from 11 Larch End described the flooding problems that had affected his own and neighbouring property over the past five years. The ditch dug by Mr King some years ago had not been sufficient to prevent flooding earlier this year. An idea discussed with Trevor Gwynne of SODC was that this ditch should be directly linked to the main drain but Mr Willbery did not know whether this suggestion had been progressed or not. Cllr Mrs Tomline said that she understood a land survey had recently been completed and Mr Gwynne would be in touch again soon. Cllr Moss said that as he remembered it the ditch, when first dug, had been described as an ‘interim measure’. Residents have suffered property damage, stress, cancelled holidays and increased insurance costs.

## b) Ernie Tipping complained about road signs pointing in the wrong direction and the state of the road surface outside Rookery House. Cllr David Turner said that the Watlington/Wallingford direction sign would be corrected soon and that he was pressing for the road outside Rookery House to be repaired. He asked if vandals were responsible for turning signs to face the wrong way but it was said that this is only part of the problem.

## c). Mr Tipping went on to talk about the congestion outside the school, caused by both normal school traffic and also special events. Cllr Moss said that parents often park too close to the corners. The Chairman said that the school would be ask to request that parents park with more consideration to other road users.

## d). Mr Tipping said that he did not agree with the Parish Council’s decision about the wooden memorial on the grave of Peter-Jan Glover. The Chairman said that the Council believed that this was the best decision that could be made given the extremely difficult and emotional circumstances.

## e). Basil Townsend asked if there was any more information about council employees being allowed to spread Council Tax payments over 12 months. Cllr Turner confirmed that this is permitted when council employees elected to have their Council Tax deducted from payment of their monthly salaries and the Council said that there were some administrative savings from such a scheme. Mr Townsend complained that was discriminatory but the Chairman said that the matter was not one for the Parish Council.

## f). Mr Townsend complained about a large vehicle which parks on The Hill causing an obstruction and also cars parking on The Green.

## g). Mike Patrick said that there were places where the street lighting should be improved and the Chairman agreed that this should be put on the agenda for the Council’s next meeting. He asked for councillors and residents to think of places for new lights.

## h). Geoff Blackman of 54 Elm Drive spoke in opposition to the planning application for 66 Oxford Road. He said that the detailed application was not in line with the outline plans approved in 2000 and the plans which had now been submitted showed trees that were no longer there while not showing a building that was there.

## i). Mrs King from 8 Hazel End asked how much property development is permitted without the need for formal planning permission. Cllr Mrs Tomline said that she was familiar with the property about which Mrs King is concerned and that she had already asked the District Council’s enforcement officer to visit.

5. The Minutes of the Meeting of 2nd June were approved and signed after the correction of some typing errors.

6 Matters Arising from the Minutes

## a). The Clerk said that the request for a monthly skip service had been answered by the provision of a regular collection of ‘green’ waste from the Sports Club car park.

## b). The County Council had said that it would not release the name of the person who had objected to the Order confirming the footpath near the Village Hall

## c). The Clerk said that he now had the names of all the bus companies which pass through Garsington (Charlton & Otmoor, Heyfordian and Greyline) serving the schools and he would write to them in time for the start of the new school term in September.

## d). Cllr Mrs Tomline and the Clerk (in Cllr Moss’s absence) had attended the Oxford Fringe Forum. The notes would be circulated in due course.

## e). In the hope of clearing the overhanging branches on Clinkard’s Hill the Chairman has spoken to Andrew King and the Clerk has brought the matter to the attention of Mike Dickinson from Highways.

## f). The Clerk confirmed that he had booked the Village Hall 4th August and said that the published agenda for tonight’s meeting mentions that the next Parish Council meeting will be on 4th August.

## g). There was no further progress to report in the matter of the application seeking a Lawful Development Certificate at 155-157 Oxford Road.

## 7. County Councillor’s Report

The Chairman welcomed County Cllr David Turner to the meeting. Cllr Turner said that he had been appointed as Chairman of the County Council at the beginning of April.

Cllr Turner said that the Government has now admitted that it was in error in the calculation of funding some areas of teachers’ pay and pensions. In the current year schools are being allowed to make up the shortfall by using funds set aside for capital expenditure. An investigation has been called for both the County Council and the Local Government Association.

Cllr Turner said that an archaeological dig on the site of Oxford Castle is well worth visiting and announced that the County Museum in Woodstock has been granted funding from the Lottery. He commended a new Internet site [www.thamespilot.org.uk](http://www.thamespilot.org.uk).

He said that he would take up the points that residents had made about the roads. Cllr Moss raised concerns about the passing of heavy traffic through the Village on the way to BMW. Cllr Turner said that County is conducting a survey of strategic routes that may result in new weight restriction orders on certain roads. He said that a direct approach to some companies appealing for them to observe good environmental practice had been reasonably successful and he would try this tack with BMW.

The Chairman said that the traffic calming survey had not been done and also commented on new signs for bus stops, which had been erected without any consultation with the Parish.

Cllr Turner said he already been approached by a resident whose access is being blocked by one of the new signs and that he would follow up the matter of the traffic survey.

8. District Councillor’s Report

Cllr Mrs Tomline said that the new planning committee arrangements had proved to be something of a fiasco with meetings lasting for up to four hours and still not managing to complete all the business on the agenda. She also pointed out that councillors were sometimes making site visits to neighbourhoods with which they are unfamiliar.

Cllr Mrs Tomline also said that she was concerned about quite a high level of staff turnover at the Council. The appointment of a sports development officer had been axed by the new administration.

9 Finance and cheques for signature

Bank balances were as follows

Bank of Ireland (at 5th June) £107,456.34 (interest earned in the month £286.27)

Barclays Community A/c (at 30th June) £8,406.19

Barclays Base Rate Tracker A/c (at 10th June) £8,136.39

(interest earned March-June £25.28)

Newsletter advertising receipts in June were £115.00

The following cheques were approved for payment:

Wooster Landscaping £558.13

Household Pest Services £164.50

Valuation Office Agency £352.50

Oxfordshire Green Belt Network (sub) £15.00

Southern Electric £11.01

Colourplus (June/July) £585.54

Four Seasons Tree Care £293.75

Clerk’s salary & Expenses £272.75

Doug Wheeler re tractor mower £240.46

HHB Architects (re Village Hall) £1,810.97

Bank Mandate

The new Mandate was approved with the three signatories (from whom two must sign all cheques) being the Chairman, Cllr Eden, the Vice-Chairman, Cllr Bolam and Cllr Mrs Tomline.

Cllr Mrs Tomline declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the next item and left the room while it was being discussed

Cyril Tomline’s Honorarium as editor of the Garsington Newsletter was discussed. It had been set at £787.50 in June 2002. Cllr Moss proposed and Cllr Bolam seconded a motion that the Honorarium for 2003/4 should be set at £820 and this was approved unanimously.

The Clerk distributed an analysis of the Council’s charitable giving over the past three financial years. It was agreed that a discussion about the Council’s budget for charitable contributions and the criteria for approving applications for assistance should be held over to the next meeting.

10. Planning

Cllr Mrs Tomline said that, as a member of the SODC Northern Area Planning Committee, she would not vote on these matters when they were decided by the Parish Council. She could not disclose to the Parish Council how she intended to vote on these matters when they were decided by the Planning Committee, as further information may be available at the planning meeting. During the Parish Council’s discussions prior to a vote, however, she was available to give advice and answer questions on factual matters if invited.

Applications

P03/W0476/LB 18 The Green,

Conversion of semi derelict barn to ancillary domestic accommodation

The Council decided to recommend refusal. There were four votes in favour of refusal and one abstention.

P03/N0139 55 South End (amendment)

Demolition of existing dwelling. Erection of two detached dwellings with garages.

The Council had no objection to this amendment

P03/W0515/RM 66 Oxford Road, Erection of new dwelling/creation of new access

There were concerns about restricted access and it was felt that the scale of the proposed development is unneighbourly. It was unanimously agreed that the Council should recommend refusal.

Planning Decisions

Lomond House PO3/N0340 additiona of two fanlight windows to approved scheme.

This planning application has been approved

The Clerk has circulated to all councillors a copy of the letter from Adrian Duffield, SODC’s Head of Planning Services, in which the changes to the Planning Service and Planning Committee are described in detail.

11. Correspondence to Chairman and Clerk

## a). Community Waste Service: details of the introduction of a collection service for green compostable waste have been circulated

## b). With assistance from the Chairman, the Clerk has replied to the District Council’s request for information about the Land Use Class for every street in the Parish. This is to assist with the assessment of standards under Best Value Performance indicators for Environmental Cleanliness, as set by the Audit Commission.

## c). The Draft Map issue relating to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 is now on deposit at SODC’s offices and also on the Internet. Details have been circulated.

## d). Details of new bus services have been posted on the Village notice boards.

## e). A letter has been received from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister setting out new ethical framework regulations and a copy has been given to each councillor.

## f). The Licensing Committee’s decision about Garsington Opera has been received and will be circulated

## g). Details of the periodic electoral review of Oxfordshire County Council have been received and will be circulated.

## h) The Clerk has received some advice about whether or not the Council should be registered under the Data Protection Act which costs £35 per year. This will be considered in due course.

## i). The County Council has invited Parishes to send representatives to a meeting to evaluate the Area Forums. This will take place during the day on 25th July but no-one was able to attend.

12 Playground

It was agreed that as many councillors as possible should meet on site at the Playground at 9.30 a.m. on Saturday, 12th July and the findings as a result of that visit would be discussed at the August meeting

13. Old Stone Cross

The Clerk confirmed that he had advised the District Council’s conservation department that if the contractor had not completed the work by the end of July, recommendations of a new contractor would be requested.

14. Village Maintenance

Flooding: Cllr Mrs Tomline said that once the District Council’s survey has been done the proposed rectification scheme will have to be costed and money found for its implementation. She will follow up and keep pressing for progress to be made in this matter. The Clerk is to try and establish clearly where the legal responsibilities lie and the Parish Council will try to assist in finding a resolution.

The lamination of the map on the stand of the Village Green has not worked and the Clerk is to find someone who would take on the task engraving a new version.

The Chairman said that he would use the next Newsletter to ask all residents and landowners to look after the boundaries of their property including ditches and banks adjoining neighbours.

Cllr Saini said that the lower branches of a tree at the junction of Elm Drive and Oxford Road need to be trimmed back because they are obscuring drivers’ views of approaching traffic. He also asked if a sign could be placed outside the shops in Elm Drive requesting ‘no ball games’. It was agreed to wait until the Council was able to open an alternative play area at that end of the Village.

The Clerk was asked to find out whether the Council has any powers to bring in a contractor to care for gardens when the owners are not able to look after them.

Cllr Mrs Eastwood said that the Christmas tree off The Green needs to be removed and a new one purchased. She also produced a list of sites where it might be advantageous to place litterbins.

15. Housing Needs Survey

Suzanne Gibbins, Rural Housing Enabler of ORCC, explained that her role is to assist Parish Councils who want to develop schemes for Affordable Housing.

She stressed that this type of housing is relatively inexpensive because the land is acquired cheaply – the specifications of the homes are not compromised. Half an acre of land can be sufficient for a small scheme. She stressed that there are a variety of different types and size of scheme and different types of tenure that can be offered.

The first step is to conduct a Housing Needs Survey and to involve the whole Parish in at least part of this survey, which would be paid for largely by the ORCC. If the need for a scheme is identified a working group is set up to look for a suitable site, check planning approvals, seek applications for the housing from qualifying people and choose a housing association to operate the development.

It was agreed that this topic should be discussed again by the Council at a future meeting.

16. Land off Oxford Road, being part of Clarke’s Farm

The Parish Council confirmed its decision to proceed with the purchase of the freehold of this land from Mrs Jean Osborne for £11,000 subject to contract. It was agreed that the Clerk would instruct Edward Pilling & Co to act for the Council in this matter.

Cllr Moss asked that his opposition to this proposal should be minuted. Cllr Mrs Tomline asked that an article about this proposed purchase be supplied for the next Newsletter.

17. Code of Conduct – Training video, books etc

It was agreed that Councillors would study this material in their own time and discuss the matter again at the next meeting.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will take place on Monday 4th August.

Councillor Mrs Anne Eastwood said that she would be away and asked that her Apologies for Absence be recorded.