Garsington Parish Council

The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Monday 5th July 2004 commencing at 7.30pm

1. The Chairman, Councillor Godfrey Eden, presided; present were Councillors Paul Bolam, Anne Eastwood, John Goodey, Cliff Moss, Gurdip Saini, Cliff Shuker and Ann Tomline with G Russell in attendance. Also present was County Cllr David Turner and ten residents of the Parish.

2. There were no Apologies for Absence, all councillors being present.

3. Election of Parish Council Chairman 2004/5

Cllr Paul Bolam, Vice-Chairman, took the chair for this item. Cllr Cliff Moss proposed that Cllr Godfrey Eden should be elected and this was seconded by Cllr Mrs Ann Tomline. There were no other nominations; Cllr Eden was declared elected and resumed the chair.

4. Election of Parish Council Vice-Chairman 2004/5

Cllr John Goodey proposed that Cllr Paul Bolam should be elected and this was seconded by Cllr Cliff Moss. There were no other nominations; Cllr Bolam was declared elected.

5. Declarations of Acceptance of Office

Cllrs Eden and Bolam signed the Declarations which were witnessed by the Clerk.

6. Public Participation

Ernie Tipping said that the side of Pettiwell owned by Mrs Osborne still needs attention. Mrs Osborne had written to the Clerk in February saying that she would attend to the trees on her land.

In response to a question about progress with the Footpath Modification Order, Cllr Mrs Tomline said that she understood the backlog of this type of work was several years. The Clerk will investigate.

Mr McDowall of 68 Oxford Road asked the Council to recommend refusal of the Application PO4/W0723 for the erection of two dwellings at 66, Oxford Road;

7 Declarations of Interest

Cllr John Goodey declared an interest in Application PO4/W0723 for 66, Oxford Road and Cllr Cliff Moss an interest in Application PO4/W0735 for 78 Oxford Road. In both cases the applicants were known personally by the Councillors.

8 Minutes of the Meeting of 7th June

Three corrections were made. It was suggested that the sign at the gate of the Memorial Playing Field should specify when the car park (not the play area) is open; the payment of the cheque to HHB Architects had been approved at the meeting of the Village Hall Committee and the maps in the Millennium Map stand had not 'disappeared' - Cllr Shuker had removed them for safekeeping and replacements are in hand. The Minutes as amended were approved and signed.

9 Matters Arising from the Minutes

a). Cllr Moss reported that the occupant of 1 Birch Road is now in favour of the neighbouring trees being removed.

b). The Council had made site visits to the Burial Ground, Play Area and The Hill/Sadlers Croft on Thursday 24th June.

c). The Clerk has been told of objections to the Little Milton entry treatments. Cllr Turner has arranged to reconvene a Five Parishes meeting on 15th July and invited Garsington Parish Council to be represented.

d). The Clerk raised the possibility of entering the WREN Community Hall challenge. Garsington is geographically eligible for this. There are two awards to a maximum of £250,000 each, with the other finalists also receiving a grant. The closing date for entry is 30th July 2004 and the details will be passed to Peter Rodger.

e). The SODC Conservation Officer has contacted English Heritage about the Old Village Cross but as she is on leave it is not known whether a reply has been received.

f). An acknowledgement has been received in response to the Council's letter in June which opposed the objections lodged against the Plan by Brasenose College.

g). It was agreed that Parish Council minutes, once approved by the Council, could be posted on the Village website. It was agreed that the Clerk could use the Garsington Newsletter to tell residents about the site and ask for correspondents.

10 County Councillor’s Report

David Turner said that the delay in dealing with the Parish Council's request for a traffic calming scheme was very regrettable. The County just did not have sufficient staff and the cost of local housing was one of the main barriers to recruitment. An engineer from Babtie has now been seconded to the Council and the Chairman agreed to meet Mr Ronald as soon as possible.

Cllr Turner said that throughout the County there were more complaints about Highways issues than any other topic. It was clear that money needed to be diverted from another budget and he suggested that Parishes should write to the Chief Executive of the County Council because the Highways were suffering as a result of under investment in previous years.

The Green belt issue is the main one affecting Garsington. The District is under considerable pressure for more housing. Cllr Turner said that if each of the District's 83 villages had room for ten affordable homes it would make a huge difference.

He asked for feedback about the timing of the bus service. Cllr Mrs Tomline said that she thought that the morning and evening services were well used but not the lunchtime service.

In response to matters raised, Cllr Turner said that he would take up the matter of visibility at the Horspath turn being impaired by roadside vegetation and the general matter of grass-cutting, although the County had reduced the number of cuts per year from five to three.

Basil Townsend criticised some of the traffic calming measures that had been introduced in other villages and Cllr Turner said that by its nature most traffic calming schemes are experimental to some extent.

The County does not wish to spend any money on the kerb at Rookery House; he would ask about the possibility of re-surfacing Elm Drive

11 District Councillor's Report

Cllr Mrs Tomline said that the Council has budgeted £2,000 for a flood scheme at Larch End and was looking to the Parish Council for £3,000.

She has had numerous contacts with Horspath residents in the joint campaign to oppose the grabbing of Green Belt land on the edge of Oxford for more housing.

She has been following up the Council's request for more litterbins, which had been made and accepted earlier in the year, before the review was imposed.

She raised the problem that can arise for drivers of the local buses when cars are parked in Southend near the Brew House where the road is already very narrow.

12 Finance and cheques for signature

The balance in Barclays Current Account on 30th June was £471.98 and there was £199.68 in the 'Tracker' account.

The balance in the Bank of Ireland on 7th June was £111,058.66; interest of £373.74 had been received in the month. Newsletter advertising receipts in June amounted to £225 and Burial Ground receipts were £181. The Clerk said that he would send off the Council's claim for VAT repayment before the next Council meeting.

The following accounts were approved for payment

Edward Pilling & Co balance due £40.00

G Russell salary June/July £246.43

G. Russell admin & travel expenses June/July £84.14

Village Hall Committee (room hire) £60.00

The auditors have distributed a model Risk Assessment and this will be studied by Cllr Bolam with another copy on general circulation to all.

The Council noted that the allowances for car expenses have been increased.

13 Planning

Applications:

(a). PO4/W0723 66, Oxford Road; Erection of two dwellings

(Cllr Goodey left the room while this matter was discussed)

The Council noted the receipt of several letters of objection to this application. It was unanimously decided to recommend refusal on the grounds that the proposal represents an over-development of the site and is un-neighbourly.

(b). PO4/W0735 78 Oxford Road; Erection of a two-storey side extension

(Cllr Moss left the room while this matter was discussed)

The Council had no strong views on this application.

Appeals & Decisions

PO4/W0533 8 Pine Close, Conversion of garage into living accommodation

Planning permission granted 29th June

PO4/W0531/LB 36 The Hill, Thatch removal and replacement

Listed Building consent has been refused on the grounds that type of thatch proposed is inappropriate within the Conservation Area

PO4/W0494 44 Wheatley Road, Covered patio with bedroom over

Planning permission granted 7th June

PO4/W0088 81 Oxford Road, Demolition of existing bungalow and erection of two storey dwelling

Planning permission granted 23rd June

PO4/W0533 155-157 Oxford Road - It was noted that the appeal is to commence 20th July at Benson Parish Hall and is expected to last three days

14 Correspondence to Chairman and Clerk

a). An invitation to view a video made with local school children has been received. b). A report of a dangerous tree by 31 Combewell has been passed to Highways.

c). The Council noted the temporary closure of Oxford Road on 18th July.

d). The text about Garsington to appear in the District Council's tourist brchure was considered and approved with a minor amendment to be advised by the Clerk.

e). Rob Jeffrey General Building Services of 115 Oxford Road and Noel Donnelly of 161 Oxford Road have responded to the invitation in the Newsletter to register their interest as local contractors who would undertake building and maintenance works for the Parish Council.

f). Mr and Mrs Styles of 3 Fox Close have written in support of the Council's view about maintaining the Green Belt.

g). Rev. Richard Cowles has asked the Parish Council to nominate two trustees to assist in the winding up of a trust that had been established in 1976 but no longer served a useful purpose. Cllrs Paul Bolam and Ann Tomline agreed to volunteer.

h). Shirley Royal, on behalf of the Church, had written to thank the Parish Council for dealing with the broken manhole cover by the church gate. She also said that vandals are damaging the church floodlights. The lights are insured but there is an insurance excess of £50. She asked the Parish Council to pay this amount and this was agreed.

15 Allocation of Councillors' responsibilities 2004/5

It was agreed to discuss this matter at the next Council meeting.

16 Village Maintenance

The Clerk's notes about the site visits had been circulated. It was agreed that matters relating to the Burial Ground should be discussed with the Rector as soon as he returned from leave. The Chairman has revisited the Burial Ground and counted 34 plots where the graves are not being maintained according to the regulations.

Playdale's representative is to visit the play area this week.

Cllr Bolam said that he would draft some wording for the proposed play area notices and the advice of Playdale would also be requested.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would not pay for the re-surfacing of Sadlers Croft unless it could be shown in the Council's records that it had in the past accepted the long-term responsibility to maintain Sadlers Croft.

The Garsington Society is making progress with the new gate. The Chairman stressed that the Council had not made any decision that the Society should take on any additional tasks like care of the war memorial or any additional footpaths. Cllr Mrs Tomline proposed a vote of thanks to Cllr Moss for all his work looking after the memorial and this was passed unanimously.

Cllr Moss said that he and Mike Patrick had been dismayed by the District Council's response to their application for a grant. A number of questions, some seeming to be extremely trivial, had been raised, and he and Mr Patrick no longer wished to pursue the matter. He said that he understood the Sports Club is up to date with its rent payments to the Parish Council and the Clerk said that he would enquire further.

17 Affordable Housing

A 30% response rate had been achieved and the questionnaire replies are now with the independent analysts. A report is expected by September.

18 Land off Oxford Road.

The legal documents have now been received from the Council's solicitors, which prompted the enquiry as to where the Council's other legal titles, deeds etc are stored. The Clerk will report to the next Council meeting.

It was agreed that the first priority is for the Council to meet with those residents who are close neighbours of the land that has been acquired but only after each councillor has made a visit to the site and become familiar with it.

It was agreed that councillors should do this and meet again for a special discussion on the subject at 7.00 pm on Monday 12th July in the Village Hall if available.

The Meeting closed at 9.48 pm