Garsington Parish Council

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Village Hall on Monday 3rd October 2005 commencing at 7.30 pm

The Chairman, Councillor Godfrey Eden, presided; present were Councillors David Baker, Paul Bolam, Anne Eastwood, Cliff Moss and Cliff Shuker with G Russell in attendance. Also present were County Cllr David Turner, District Cllr Ann Tomline and six residents of the Parish.

1. Apologies for Absence were accepted from Cllr Saini who is unwell;

2 Public Participation

Several residents expressed their concerns about what they regarded as an insufficient opportunity for residents to comment on the proposed traffic calming schemes in Oxford and Wheatley Roads. Some also commented about the difficulty of making contact with Peter Ronald, the County Council’s engineer dealing with the matter, while others had found Mr Ronald’s manner less than polite. County Cllr David Turner pointed out that there would be a right for public participation when the matter comes before the Council committee and also that Mr Ronald has said that he will take into account letters which he receives as a result of the publicity which the proposals have received in the Newsletter. District Cllr Mrs Tomline said that in her experience Mr Ronald has always been extremely courteous and helpful.

3 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman said he would declare an interest when reporting later in the meeting on a letter which he has received from a resident.

4 Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th September 2005

These were approved and signed as a true record.

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. The new seat at The Gizzel has been installed.

b. The Clerk has prepared a draft letter to local residents about parking on The Green but councillors commented that the problem seemed to have become less serious over the past few weeks.

c. Rob Jeffrey has completed the first part of his works programme and will complete the jobs at Kings Copse before the next meeting.

d. Cllr Bolam had attended the District Council’s Town and Parish Council Forum taking part in both the Affordable Housing and the Planning workshops. There had not been a great deal new in the affordable housing meeting but he had gained some insight into the benefits of developing a village plan.

e. Cllr Baker confirmed that he had had a meeting at Kiln Lane with Mark Sumner, the Field Officer from the County’s Countryside Services. But he had been disappointed by the County’s apparent unwillingness to take on any of the work, preferring to rely on the adjoining landowners.

f. Cllr Moss said that the Police have now been in touch with him about the incident at the Sports Club earlier in the year and the matter will receive further investigation.

6 County Councillor’s Report

County Cllr David Turner said that he understood that Mark Sumner has agreed to see if Thames Water had removed the barrier and should therefore be responsible for re-instating it at the company’s expense. He also said that he would look at the map to see if the County ought to be responsible for cutting the grass in Kiln Lane.

Cllr Turner said that there is insufficient space for a roundabout at the Horspath turn and that mini roundabouts are not considered suitable in locations where there is no speed limit. Coloured banding and/or the word ‘slow’ could be painted onto the road at the approach to the junction. It is generally thought by older residents that the roadside verge is not as wide as it once was. The meeting was not sure in which parish the junction is located. Cllr Turner said that he would find out.

The County Council’s consultation about house building plans for 2016 and beyond has started. The scheme south of Grenoble Road is not included in the consultation document but Cllr Turner said that the suggestion of reconsidering that option will certainly be made. It would do no harm if residents wrote in to oppose that idea.

The County’s consultation about plans for future extraction of Minerals is being circulated with views required by mid November.

Cllr Moss said that the conifers at Birch Road are still standing and Cllr Turner said that he would follow this up.

7 District Councillor’s Report

District Cllr Ann Tomline said that the Council’s Forestry Officer will shortly be inspecting the condition of trees in the Garsington area. She has a meting booked with Jaz Lally on 11th October. It appears that details of the King’s Copse site licence have not been properly notified.

The County has several outstanding enforcement notices concerning the scrapyard business, now under new ownership, and she would supply the Clerk with contact details for the officer concerned.

Many parishes are concerned that they will have virtually no consultative role when the new licensing arrangements come into force and she asked if the Parish Council would write to the District Council on this matter.

Cllr Moss said that he was concerned that some local residents might be illegally carrying out building work which should have received planning consent. Cllr Tomline said that this would be a matter for the planning enforcement team but there were hardly any staff in this department.

8 Finance and cheques for signature

The Council’s bank balances were as follows:

Bank of Ireland balance at 5th September £117,014.15 (interest £396.17)

Barclays current a/c bal. at 30th September £16, 979.30

Barclays Base Rate Tracker 9th September £50.09

Burial Ground receipts totalled £189 and Newsletter advertising receipts totalled £275. The Council had received £9,185 from SODC, being the second half of the Precept.

The following cheques were approved for payment

BDO Stoy Hayward LLP (annual audit) £338.40

IJP Building Conservation Ltd (old stone cross) £3,525.00

Clerk’s salary £290.56

Admin expenses £72.85

C A Grace (hedge cutting around playing field) £188.00

Rob Jeffrey (work school steps to Sadlers Croft) £760.00

It was agreed that the Conservation Officer be asked to inspect the work carried out by IJP on the Old Stone Cross, although everyone thought the job had been well done.

The Clerk distributed the first draft of a schedule of the Parish’s property which is to form the basis of the Council’s official Asset Register. Comments and suggested additions would be welcomed.

J. J. Bark Garden Machinery have supplied an estimate for servicing the Ransomes 213 mower which comes to £1,400. It was agreed that at least one additional estimate should be obtained.

9 Planning

a. Application

P05/W0664/RET amended 131 Oxford Road

Erection of double garage to the rear (amendment to P05/W0040)

Addition of dormer window. There were no objections to this amendment

P05/W0517 100 Wheatley Road

Rear extension - amendment to width of access.

There were no objections to this amendment

b. Decisions and other Planning matters

P05/W0862 28 Combewell.

Garage demolish, single storey side extension erect

Planning permission granted 15th September

P05/W0822 75 Southend

Velux windows on south elevation

Planning permission granted 19th September

P05/W0839 131 Oxford Road

Rear extension

Planning permission granted 21st September

10 Correspondence to Chairman and Clerk

a. The Chairman referred to the notice concerning the forthcoming AGM of the Village Hall committee and repeated his encouragement for all councillors to attend and discuss proposals for the future of the building.

b. The Chairman informed the Council that the Post Office in Elm Drive is to close later this month because the new owners of the shop do not wish to carry it on. The need for alternative premises is paramount. Even once new premises have been found it will take 12 weeks for the new service to commence. One of the pubs might be willing to take this on but any suggestions would be welcome. The Post Office has said that it is keen to retain a branch within the village.

c. The Chairman said that some businessmen wish to start a small retail outlet at the Equestrian Centre which would sell local produce. He asked councillors to consider this suggestion in principle and report back.

d. The Three Horseshoes has decided not to go ahead with the idea of a bonfire party. Apparently the new landlords needed outside support to run the event. It was thus perfectly acceptable for the Sports and Social Club to run its Firework Display on 4th November and Cllr Moss agreed to pass on the Council’s approval which had been requested in a letter sent to the Clerk by the Club’s Hon. Secretary.

e. The Council noted the changes in the District Council’s garden waste service. The sales of green plastic garden waste bags has ceased (although collections will continue until stocks have been used up) and the price of the paper sacks reduced to 30p each.

f. The agents for Christ Church have asked for a meeting with the Parish Council to discuss the possibility of affordable housing at Kiln Farm. Cllr Bolam said that the site had been considered unsuitable for the purpose when the village survey was carried out but he will raise this again next time he meets with Suzanne Willers.

g. The County has been asked for its views about the future of the Oxfordshire Transport Co-ordinator. The Council has had no experience of this officer. County Cllr Turner explained that the role included looking at alternatives to bus services when these are withdrawn.

h. Stephanie Byrne of 118 Oxford Road had written to the Chairman about the possibility of setting up a Baby and Toddler group. Cllr Eden took no part in this discussion as the resident is known to him but Cllr Mrs Tomline agreed to advise.

i. Invitations have been received for the Council to be represented at the forthcoming annual meetings of the Oxford Green Belt, the Playing Fields Association and ORCC.

11 Report of External Auditor

The Auditor’s comments were noted. They will be circulated and advertised. The Clerk said that the Council has already taken action to deal with most of the comments and that the remaining areas will be addressed in the current year.

12 Land off Oxford Road

The Clerk was asked to organise a meeting with the local residents to take place in the Village Hall on 24th October. Cllr Shuker will follow this up by producing a summary of the proposals for publication in the Newsletter

13 Traffic Calming

Details of the schemes have been published in the Newsletter and will continue to be available on the notice boards. Some residents have said that there has been insufficient opportunity for residents to comment but the Chairman said that he believed that the article in the Newsletter serves as an encouragement for all residents to comment if they wish to do so.

Cllr Mrs Tomline said that over several years the Council has been criticised for the lack of action on this project. More residents are in favour of introducing the scheme than are against.

14. Affordable Housing

The Chairman said that he has received a letter from a resident which asks, under the Freedom of Information Act, for details about which sites are being considered. The Chairman confirmed that this request would be answered within the due date and Cllr Bolam said that he would discuss the matter with Suzanne Willers.

15 Village Maintenance

The new rubbish bin for the play area will be delivered later in the week. Councillors agreed to await the report from County Council following the meeting between the officer and Councillors David Turner and David Baker regarding Kiln Lane..

16 Future of Concessionary fares Scheme

Councillors wished to support the present arrangements and the Clerk would be asked to advise SODC accordingly.

The meeting ended at 9.45 pm