Report of Environment Committee Meeting on 6th Nov 2012
at 8.30 a.m. in Committee Room of School House, Otford.

Present – Jane Lawrey, Charmian Marsh, Elizabeth Ward.

The very wet weather has meant that Autumn working party/s have not taken place. It is hoped that Telston Park can receive some TLC before Christmas, weather permitting. Work is also needed on various trees around the village following the visit of The Kent Men of the Trees representative.

Concern was expressed by all about the disease attacking Ash trees CHALARA FRAXINEA (ash dieback). Otford has a considerable number of Ash trees particularly in Oxenhill Woods and Palace Park Wood and there are others dotted about the village. Although there has been information in Radio and TV programmes and in the press it is intended to include an item in the next Parish Newsletter to ask folk to keep a watch on any trees known to them and notify the Parish Office if the disease is suspected. This will be difficult at his time of the year as there has been a quick leaf fall this autumn.
A brief explanation was given by EW about the site meeting of the Oxenhill Woods Management Group on 12th September.

Correspondence

Email from Woodland Trust with a request from a member of the public, who would like to place a bench in Palace Park Wood. This will be on the edge of a path and the group could see no reason for objection. The planting of more trees on the site has not been taken up as yet due to the very WET autumn. Contact will be made in the hope that the community can plant in the spring as a belated Jubilee Wood project.

Email from Kent Downs AONB Unit enclosing a draft Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) report for Kent Downs AONB Management Plan. The Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage are the statutory consultees for the SEA. They also thought that parishes that are covered by the KDAONB should have the opportunity to make comments on the document and a short consultation questionnaire was also enclosed. This has been returned as requested, together with a letter from the Otford and District Historical Society expressing some concerns that are affecting the North Downs Way footpath in our village (forming part of the European Union International Long Distance Route E2, stretching from Middleton, Armagh, N.I. via the North Downs, Geneva, Switzerland, to Nice, Provence, France, some 3,000 miles in all).
The Env. C’tee. suggested that information and photographs could be gathered to form a display in the Heritage Centre, as it was felt that many
folk in the village and its surrounds were unaware of this significant footpath passing right through the centre of Otford.

Letter from Mrs. Fogden – re - tipping of garden waste in the Chalkpit.

Email from Open Spaces Society asking us to write urgently to our MP requesting him to speak against clause 13 of the Growth and Infrastructure Bill – the threat to town and village greens. The second reading was on Tues. 30th October.

Electronic Newsletter from Peter Raine - Kent Countryside Management Partnerships. Engaging people and communities to manage, enhance, explore and inspired by their natural environment.

Electronic copy of ‘Open Space’ Magazine for Autumn 2012. This is a national magazine and shows a photograph of Pat Wilson, OSS vice president and also president of the Meopham and District Footpath Society cutting a cake to celebrate the Society’s 50th anniversary.

Email from Les Jones at SDC ( Arboricultural and Landscape Officer.
Re - Ash tree die back - for more information www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara

Letter from Kent Men of the Trees - Otford has been awarded the Chairman’s prize of £35 plus a tree of our choice. Also they wish to present us with an English Oak to commemorate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee. They wish to attend the planting of both trees. Two copies of the judge’s report was enclosed. The latter will be used to tend the trees mentioned sometime over the next few months.

Letter from Kent Tree and Pond Wardens – explaining their work and requesting a donation of £50 or £100 per parish for training and support. Brian Thomas is our tree and pond warden and is more than qualified for both positions. The committee felt it was not necessary to send a donation. A letter will be sent informing them of Brian’s involvement.

Email from SDC re Defibrillator and Basic First Aid Awareness Training – 7th December, book in as soon as possible.

Received ‘ORCHID’ magazine Autumn 2012 – for general perusal, it contains a picture of our solar system ‘sun’!!

Received a copy of ‘Countryside Voice’ magazine - Winter 2012
Another interesting magazine if we have time to read them!

Dates for the following year - all on a Tuesday at 8 30 a.m.

Working parties  t.b.a.

Cllr Elizabeth Ward  6/11/2012