Report of the Environment Committee Meeting of 12th March 2013 at 9.30a.m.

Present – Mary Evans, Jane Lawrey, Charmian Marsh, Elizabeth Ward (chair)

The January meeting was reviewed.

Information about ash die back CHALARA FRAXINEA is to hand and trees in the village will be checked as the year progresses. The disease will be brought to the attention of parishioners periodically through the monthly newsletter. It was noted that the ash tree felled on land at the side of Gullivers had not been burned as is recommended if it has this disease. Can this be checked, as spores can be transmitted and there are other ash trees in the vicinity?

Litter - has been collected by the committee from the station to Tudor Drive, Pilgrims’ Way East and the Chalkpit since the last meeting, and will continue. We wish to propose that a litter bin is placed outside the exit gate on the downside at the station, and at the exit from the station car park on the footpath to the churchyard. Also in Bubblestone Road where the footpath goes to Castle House drive and the church car park.

A letter of thanks is to be sent to the staff at McDonalds for their assistance with litter collection.

Level Crossing at the Station - Committee ask that a request is made to Network Rail for the crossing to be cleared of weeds etc.

Oxenhill Woods – The meeting due to be held tomorrow has been cancelled due to heavy snowfall and will now be held on 10th April at 10am. Two vehicles have been torched in the area last week. The owner of one has been traced and is very upset as the vehicle was used for his business. Concern was expressed that the driveway in Tudor Crescent extending over footpath 49 to a property, could be a new entrance for joy riders wishing to get to the woodland area. Access to the site will be discussed fully on 10th April. Scrub at the edges of rides has been cut back. The site is extremely muddy due to the wet autumn and winter and the damage done by joy riders. Ask for a tactile surface to be laid where the drive crosses the footpath as blind people use this route.

Kent Wildlife Trust would like to run an event in the area or be involved in an event this will be discussed on 10th.

Chalkpit – Rubbish has been dumped and there is a fence on the rear boundary of a property in Tudor Drive that is leaning over into the site. These matters are to be investigated.

Scout hut area – Contact is to be made with the new group Scoutmaster to see if the site can be tidied up. Possibly a scout/parent project. We appreciate it has been a prime spot for vandalism.

Palace Park Wood - The site is extremely muddy due to wet autumn and winter. The planting of more trees by the community has been postponed. Hopefully this can take place this coming autumn.

Kent Men of the Trees – The Chairman of this organisation was accompanied by our judge, their respective wives and the lady who organises the competitions. Two trees to commemorate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee were planted on 4th March.
One, an English Oak on the lower part of the recreation ground, the nearest part to the Darent (The old name meant river of oaks). The other was a tree of our choice a white barked birch (Betula papyrifera) this was planted in Telston Park where we have an oak to celebrate her Silver Jubilee and a Golden Ash celebrating her Golden Jubilee. We also received a cheque for £35 being the final part of our prize. We have a voucher from a previous prize and these amounts will be put towards the purchase of a Rowan. A letter of thanks has been sent to the chairman enclosing the photograph and write up shown in the Sevenoaks Chronicle.

Recreation Ground – The committee wish to find out who owns the hedge on the western boundary. Also we would like the ash tree on the boundary west of the pavilion coppiced. Brian Thomas and Norman Catt to be approached, or Ross. Have OPC the funds? Other trees on the rec need minor pruning. This will be done by the committee where possible.

Telston Park – Some tidying up has taken place. The daffodils planted in 2011 are in bud and should look good for Easter. It is hoped to have a community working party in July when the birds have finished nesting, date t.b.a.

Hale Lane – There will be a committee working party at 2.30p.m. on 18th March to tidy a few trees prior to the opening of the new Children’s Play Area on Sat. 6th April.

Workshop ‘Migrating Towards Better Rivers’ 2nd March – basically dealing with the Darent and the Cray was attended by a wide variety of organisations and interests. Rod Shelton was the first speaker giving a super presentation of the history of the Darent. A folder is lodged with OPC and contains a report by Rod of the days events. A very informative day!

Working Party – 18th March 2.30 p.m. Hale Lane.

Correspondence – Risk assessment for Car Park
   6 monthly Inspection of Recreation Ground

Date of next meeting – 14th May at 8.30 a.m. School House.