Minutes of the Environment Committee Meeting held on 3rd June 2014, at 8.30 a.m. In School House.

Present – Mary Evans, Jane Lawrey, Charmian Marsh Elizabeth Ward (Chair), Mrs Irene Roy newly co-opted, was welcomed and introduced to the committee.

Apologies – None

Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Declarations of Interest – None.

Oxenhill Woods - Mary Evans reported that many of the paths are still very muddy, with water still lying in some of them. A branch ‘tepee’ has been made in the Shaw. It is not causing a problem at the moment. It is hoped that the rides will dry out before 22nd June. There are still deep ruts on some of the rides, hopefully when the grass is cut prior to the Nature Event the ruts will be less of a problem.

Chalkpit Area – The grass needs cutting, wet weather has hindered this action. Brian Thomas reports that a mini compost bin and rubbish has been dumped from the rear of a property in Tudor Drive, the resident will be contacted.

Review of Litter – Regrettably it remains a problem, particularly after a weekend. Bags of litter are left on the rec. and are attacked by foxes and magpies. The bin by the cricket nets needs to be bigger. Check the lids to make sure they close properly, bins are used, but are constantly overfull. Recommend a competition before the schools break up, encourage people to take their litter home if the bins are full.

Long Border in Palace Approach – The grass has now been cut. Heavy rain made it impossible to have a working party on 27th May, hopefully this can take place on 10th June starting at 2p.m. Brian Thomas to be approached to see if he could arrange a trailer to take away the debris.

Recreation Ground and dog fouling - Grass mowing seems to be satisfactory, but numerous emails have been received about dog fouling. It has been particularly offensive for our contractor whilst trying to carry out ‘strimming’. Concern continues over the irresponsible attitude of some dog owners who seem unaware of the dangers they may be causing to babes crawling over the grass, picnickers’ and people taking part in sporting activities on the rec. If there is no improvement all dogs will have to be kept on a lead whilst in the rec, and poo bags will have to be the responsibility of the dog owner at all times, enough publicity already given in the monthly parish newsletters over the problem.

Palace Park Wood - The grass is very long, hopefully there will be a spell of dry weather so that it can be cut.

Cemetery – The grass here has not been cut properly. A new contractor is being approached to take on the task.

Telston Park – The grass is very long throughout the site. The cut trunk of ivy covered elderberry is still awaiting removal.
Hale Lane Rec – The grass had been cut recently. The Heritage Orchard trees are growing well and fruit has set, with the exception of two apple trees that have been snapped off to half their height. Three of the trees planted in the circular seated areas have also been vandalised. It is so sad that trees planted by the community have suffered in this way. How can we stop this mindlessness? Photographs were taken.

Condition of Planters, and work on School House front garden – The one by the Bull fence has just been planted up. The two at the Parade have been replanted by Mary Evans and will be looked after by the Parade shopkeepers. Recommend that Brian Thomas be asked about painting/protecting these two planters and attaching the plaque for the one outside ‘One Stop’. They have committed £30 a year for the next three years. Russell House planter on the green still shows an abundance of pansies at the moment. Plants are in hand for the Brownies one by the Pharmacy.

Cllr. John Verrall is in conversation with Norman Catt about the work involved to complete alterations to the front garden of School House prior to planting.

Nature Event 22nd June – Preparations are progressing well, Irene Roy will contact a face painter. Letters to be delivered to the residents of Tudor Drive and Tudor Crescent, explaining possible extra parking on that day. Posters are being finalised for distribution and display as from 6th June. Charmian Marsh will contact Editor of the Church Magazine and Kay Drake for the Village column in the ‘Chronicle’. Other requirements are in hand with.

Correspondence – email from Rick Bayne re-submission to HLF for the Darent’ Valley of Visions Project’. OPC have already committed £1,000 annually for the next 3 years, F&GP Committee have recommend that it be extended to five years and this will be proposed at OPC meeting on 9th June.

Community Working Party – 10th June at 2p.m.- Shrubs in the Long Border on Palace Approach.

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 1st July, 8.30 a.m. at School House.