

## Report of the Environmental Committee Meeting March 2011

The Environmental Committee met on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011 and those present were Susan Lee, Jill Bradon, John Southey and Keith Brooks.

The first issue we discussed concerned the proposed car park to be constructed on the cricket field as part of the Village Community Field project. We were concerned that a large tarmac car park of the conventional type would only compound to the problems of water collecting outside the school following rain. There are alternative car parking methods, which are more sympathetic to the environment, not so obtrusive, blending into the natural ground cover and more importantly allowing adequate drainage so that water doesn't 'run off' and collect elsewhere. There are several types, which can be viewed at <http://www.pavingexpert.com/grasspav.htm> and it was agreed that we should insist that this type of construction be used and lobby the appropriate people in charge of the new Community Field project.

The next issue discussed was the new gas pipe installation, which is necessary as a result of the proposed renewal of the Whitchurch toll bridge will come past the school and up Muddy Lane. We thought that this would be an ideal time to propose that whilst the road in front of the school is excavated then we could get a gravel bed installed which would ensure much better drainage in the future and so cure the problem of the 'lake' appearing after rainfall in front of the school which has been a bone of contention in the past. It was therefore proposed that we contact whoever is in charge of this to find out the feasibility of getting this done.

Carrying on with the 'Muddy Lane' theme we next discussed the proposed cutting back of trees and vegetation by Scottish and Southern Electricity (SSE) which needs to be done as the growth is invasive and causing danger to power lines in close proximity. Since Muddy Lane is a well used track for walkers, cyclists, mothers with children going to school which is also aesthetically pleasing to the eye then this cutting back must be done in a sympathetic manner so as to minimise the loss of habitats for inhabitants of the lane as well as remaining 'pretty'. It was therefore decided that it would be essential that we took an active part in this together with WoTHabs and produce a detailed plan of all the trees and shrubs involved and carefully liaise with SSE to ensure that a proper job is done.

It has been pointed out by residents of Hillside that erosion of the bank on left hand kerb has occurred possibly caused by SODC vehicles reversing over it when collecting refuse, recycling or garden waste. It was decided that this will be further investigated and if proved correct then a request made to SODC to restore the grass on the bank which is at present a rutted muddy mess.

Continuing with the erosion theme it was pointed out that more unofficial 'passing places' have begun to be established on the Hardwick Road adjacent to Jubilee Walk on the way to the chalk hills. This is obviously as a result of the single-track road nature of the area however we believe that something should be done to prevent this happening possibly by introducing posts to protect the verges as is evident by the alpaca farm. This will be looked into.

Since the cut-backs as a result of the economic climate street maintenance has suffered and consequently pot holes go unfilled, leaves are not removed, kerb stones not replaced and so on. However there is a website where problems can be reported and this was used by the group to get leaves cleared from Hardwick Road. Why this isn't done as a matter of course who knows but the important thing is that using [www.fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com) does get things done. One can log on and identify the place on the map where the problem is using the cursor and then type in the details of the problem and it will automatically be sent to SODC or OCC depending on whose responsibility it is.

Lastly it was noted that there was a requirement for a litter blitz to be organised in the village and so it was agreed that the supply of bags and litter grabbers and subsequent collection of waste by SODC would be investigated and a date arranged during the year.

Many thanks for all the people who have been involved in the projects last year and I look forward to more in 2011.

Dr Keith Brooks  
Vice Chairman Whitchurch Parish Council,  
Chair of Environmental Committee