

Report of Public Meeting, 22 February 2012

The Friends of Latchmore held a meeting at Hyde War Memorial Village Hall on Wednesday 22 February at 7:00pm which was attended by over 110 people, both local and from outside the Forest but who have an interest in this work on Latchmore. Two members of the Forestry Commission who have an involvement with the project attended, as did two Verderers who have a long association with this and other restoration works.

The Aim of the meeting was:

- To inform people about the scheme and the possible issues arising from it
- To identify people's concerns
- To develop an action plan to ensure that valid concerns are addressed
- To identify who has concerns and, if appropriate, set up a "Friends of Latchmore" action group to ensure that concerns are heard and addressed.

During the meeting various Friends of Latchmore outlined the particular concerns they have with the project, illustrating these with photographic evidence from other similar sites around the Forest. During subsequent discussions many attendees raised issues over which they have concern. The most significant issue was that no Environmental Impact Assessment, specific to this work at Latchmore, had been carried out. Instead the project was relying on a generic EIA carried out some years ago. There was widespread concern that major work such as this in a highly sensitive and protected area was being planned without such a specific appraisal.

FC attendees were given an opportunity to comment on the various issues raised, although in the interests of making sure that all views were heard, the time for detailed responses was limited. Towards the end of the meeting the attendees were asked whether they still had concerns about the work going ahead as planned, and there was overwhelming agreement that this was the case.

The chairman undertook to write to those responsible for the project to outline our concerns and to ask for an Environmental Impact Assessment specific to this work to be carried out and published. This should explain what are the intended benefits of the work, and should address all the issues raised by the Friends of Latchmore. The letter will ask that substantive work on the project be suspended until the outcome of this specific EIA are known.