

Friends of Latchmore

Latchmore stream restoration project: summary of questions¹ & responses²

1) Objectives

(a) What are the specific objectives of the project in relation to flow-rates, water levels, habitats to be restored and effects on grazing?

Unsatisfactory answer. The FC Q&A gives the following objectives (with FoL comments)

- To prevent further erosion and drying out of the mires protecting these internationally important habitats for future generations. [We are not aware of any objective evidence of drying out of the mires, and work on the drainage systems below the mires can have no effect on this anyway. There is visible evidence of erosion at the exits of the mires, but no indication of whether this is natural or artificial]
- To restore Latchmore Brook to its original natural meandering course, [The natural state is not known: several former courses are visible and any choice among them is arbitrary: the stream has remediated naturally during the 50 years or more since it was modified, and now bifurcates and meanders quite nicely over much of its length]. reconnecting the stream to the floodplain and reducing further erosion [the stream is not seriously disconnected from its floodplain: it floods regularly in numerous places after moderate/heavy rain, and evidence of erosion is localised (as is that of deposition): arguably the Shade shows a stream in equilibrium.] by slowing the flow.
- To infill the straightened channel replacing an estimated 8000 - 10000 tonnes of previously eroded material. [This implies that 10,000 tonnes of material was removed. There is no evidence of this: the spoil heaps are not equivalent, and it is unlikely that material was carted away. The classification of this work as "restoration" is therefore highly dubious.]
- To improve grazing through the removal of tree and scrub species that slowly colonise the adjoining lawns. [Restoring wetland & mires will degrade grazing]
- To maintain key access routes for the benefit of forest users (this does not apply to visitors who will find access more difficult.) and commoning.

Shepherd 16/4/12 10:21

Comment [1]: NB: This is merely an operational target, not a valid objective

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Comment [2]: Mature trees do not impede grazing but have also been felled

(b) What EIA studies specific to this work on Latchmore have been undertaken, and what further work is planned?

Unsatisfactory answer: The FC Q&A says (with FoL comments)

There is no specific legal requirement to complete an EIA for this wetland restoration work in the New Forest. [On what grounds, precisely? If this is

¹ Questions all taken verbatim from the Annex to the FoL letter of 25 February 2012.

² Responses summarized by FoL on 14 April 2012 (following refusal of FC to do so)

because it is restoration the case is debatable. In any case it is normal for public bodies to follow best practice, which would require an EIA.]

An overarching Environmental Impact Assessment for wetland restoration in the Forest was undertaken by the FC in 2006 as good practice. This assessment is a generic one

[Precisely: and good practice also requires appropriate site-specific supplementary EIAs for each project]

which reviews **all the expected impacts** of standard restoration techniques that we will employ at Latchmore.

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Comment [3]: This is false: it says little/nothing about negative impacts.

2) **Monitoring, Assessment & Accountability**

(a) **What criteria of success are to be used, what surveys are planned, what are the measures of success to be used, and how would they be made public?**

Not answered at all: FoL infers "None"

(b) **In the event of problems being caused by the project, who would undertake remedial work and who would pay for it?**

Not answered at all: FoL infers "None"

(c) **What monitoring is planned of key properties including:**

- Visual & Photographic documentation
- Groundwater elevations and chemistry
- Stream (surface water) temperature & chemistry
- Stream flow (discrete or continuous)
- Stream profiles and cross sections
- Sedimentation & embeddedness
- Benthic macro-invertebrates
- Fish

Not answered at all: FoL infers "None"

3) **Efficacy**

What hydrological analysis has been carried out of the impact of the scheme on flow-rates and flooding during normal, flood and drought conditions ?

Not answered at all: FoL infers "None"

4) **Gravel stability & movement**

What hydrological analysis has been carried out concerning storm-water flow-rates, gravel movement and consequent impacts ?

Not answered at all: FoL infers "None"

5) **Biological diversity and habitat loss**

What surveys have been undertaken to establish the abundance and distribution of the flora and fauna (including fish) of the Latchmore, and the likely impacts of the scheme on them?

Not answered at all: FoL infers "None"

6) **Durability of work to be undertaken**

What evidence is available for the durability of such works, and what are the plans for monitoring the status of the work and taking remedial action (if required)?

Not answered at all: FoL infers "None"

7) **Increased flooding & extension of bogs and mires**

What is the evidence that the project could improve grazing and the welfare of livestock and at the same time restore former bogs and mires?

Not answered at all: FoL infers "None" (the only work likely to benefit grazing is scrub clearance)

8) **Interruption to flow & water supply downstream**

What hydrological studies of water flow-rates in the stream throughout its length and the effect on supply to grazing land under drought conditions have been undertaken ?

Not answered at all: FoL infers "None"

9) **Damage to grassland habitat**

Has the nature of the hummocks been determined,

Not answered at all: FoL infers "No"

and how would damage to this habitat by vehicles & machinery be prevented?

Unsatisfactory answer: only a vague general assurance that the contractors would be required to be careful

10) **Source and nature of gravel**

What is the proposed source of gravel to be used,

Incomplete answer: likely to be Avon Valley

and what provision would be made to ensure that it is free of incompatible material (e.g. calcareous sands and clays)?

Not answered at all: FoL infers "None"

11) **Archaeology**

(a) What additional archaeological field work is required to ensure an accurate survey of sites (including those from WWII) ?

Not answered at all: FoL infers "None"

(b) How would the complex of ~120 prehistoric pits and mounds just outside the Alderhill Inclosure be protected from traffic and disturbance ?

Not answered at all: FoL infers that nothing is planned.

12) **Recreation**

How would the recreational areas be protected from degradation by increased flooding and the consequent extension of boggy ground?

Not answered at all:

13) **Access – Roads & tracks**

(a) What studies have been undertaken of the likely disturbance and damage due to heavy traffic unsuitable for rural roads and tracks?

Not answered at all: FoL infers “None”.

(b) What provision would be made to prevent, reduce or mitigate disturbance and damage?

Unsatisfactory answer: Only vague assurances that measures to reduce disturbance would be discussed with the Parish Council

(c) Who would be liable for the repair of any damage caused, especially to dwellings *en route* (some of them ancient cob cottages without foundations), and to roads and tracks with soft verges?

Not answered at all:

(d) Who would be liable for the repair of any damage caused to soft ground within the valley (especially that at the bog outside the Alderhill Inclosure)?

Not answered at all:

14) **Timing**

What is the optimum timing for any work to be carried out on Latchmore to minimise the environmental impact?

Not answered at all:

15) **Environmental Impact Assessment**

(a) On what grounds has this project within the New Forest SSSI been approved and actioned, without a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment, specific to the work at the Latchmore ?

Unsatisfactory answer: see Q 1(b)

(b) When will such an assessment and report be commissioned, produced and published?

Not answered at all: FoL infers that nothing is planned

(c) Will the work at Latchmore be suspended until due consideration can be given to the findings of the site-specific EIA?

Not answered at all:

