

1. Background to Wetland and Stream Restoration in the New Forest.

The New Forest is designated both nationally (as a SSSI, Site of Special Scientific Interest) and internationally (as an SAC, Special Area of Conservation). As a consequence of past drainage activities, the catchment hydrology of the New Forest has been severely altered, which has affected both the quality and extent of fragile wetland habitats such as mire and wet heaths, as well as the watercourses themselves and their associated floodplains. The Forestry Commission and other agencies have a legal responsibility under the EU Habitats Directive to restore habitats in a SSSI where the habitat has been assessed by Natural England as being in unfavourable condition. [Natural England is unable to produce documentary evidence to support this assessment, or to say what features make it unfavourable. The assessment is therefore unsupported and cannot now be substantiated]

The importance of restoring these streams and their adjacent habitats cannot be understated – not only is it a statutory requirement of the Forestry Commission to return them to favourable condition but with future climate change predictions of wetter winters and drier summers restoring the natural systems will increase the forests resilience to the worst extremes of drought and flood. [To achieve this and increase the storage capacity of the catchment, it would be highly desirable (and much preferable) to remediate the extensive artificial drainage of the upper catchment in the Inclosures and elsewhere]

Principal objectives for the works at Latchmore:

- 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

Shepherd 11/4/12 15:05

Comment [1]: It is also an SPA and a Ramsar site

Shepherd 11/4/12 15:26

Comment [2]: This is only an operational target, not a valid objective

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. [Increasing wetland and boggy areas in the floodplain will however 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 11/4/12 15:31

Comment [3]: Mature trees do not impede grazing but have also been felled

The restoration programme in the New Forest has been running for over 15 years and has received national and international recognition. The work started under two EU Life projects, and restoration techniques have developed and improved over time.

[There is no objective basis for claiming that these have been successful, or have improved, since virtually no formal monitoring or assessment has been undertaken, or independently peer-reviewed or published].

Further information and detailed reports, including the **New Forests Wetland Management Plan 2006-2016** can be found on the New Forest Life II & III websites.

<http://www.newforestlife.org.uk/life2/conservation.htm>

<http://www.newforestlife.org.uk/life3/life3index.htm>

2. Why do you need to undertake stream restoration work here?

Natural England has assessed that the Latchmore Brook has been heavily modified by past drainage activities and that it will not fully recover without intervention. [It has recovered substantially over much of its length: what is the evidence that further recovery will not occur ?] The Forestry Commission and **other conservation bodies** agree with this assessment.

Shepherd

Comment [4]: Which ones ? Where is this documented ?

You can view the status of individual New Forest SSSI units at the following website:

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/ssi/default.aspx

The New Forest streams are of considerable geomorphological and ecological interest in their own right, but they also contribute to the function and condition of other SAC habitats – notably alluvial/riverine woodland, mires, wet grassland and bog woodland. Seasonal flooding within the floodplain is particularly important and mires control the source and flow of water to the head streams.

Shepherd

Comment [5]: This occurs already (regularly)

Latchmore Brook was modified in the early 20th Century to improve ground conditions for forestry and grazing. (If so, why and how will filling it in improve the grazing?) This drainage has had a number of undesirable effects:

- Canalisation through straightening, over deepening and over widening of the river channels has led to a change in channel morphology and width/depth ratio. The resulting loss of meanders [There are still lots of meanders, because these have re-formed naturally, and no firm evidence that there were many more in the past] and overall reduction in stream length causes water to run through the shortened channel section more rapidly. (It will still flow through rapidly because of the volume of the water during heavy rain, which is when erosion occurs). In addition, over deepening and bank-side spoil reduces the opportunity for out of bank flow and flooding of the floodplain.
- Prevention of natural flooding means that more energy is concentrated within the river channel itself [Only if the banks have been raised] resulting in increased erosion and transport of gravel. These gravels are deposited further downstream where the channel gradient reduces (The Shade shows that it is now substantially in good equilibrium – it has **not** been reduced to a narrow straight channel connecting those sections above and below. It is at “grade” i.e it has adapted naturally). This can result in the reduction of the channel capacity downstream, which in turn may cause drainage problems elsewhere.
- As the river tries to adapt to its new lowered stream bed level it creates headward erosion, often into the valley mires. [On this watercourse many of the mires are well above the stream, so this does not apply here] In some places creeping headward erosion has led to deeply incised channels in the order of 1.5m deep and lowered the water table in the surrounding floodplain (The deepened channel from Thompsons Castle has not improved from the work done 13 years ago. The exit out of the mire does not change the volume flowing during heavy rain – it is what is flowing in from the side slopes that affects this). Tuckfield (1976, 1980) studied the effects of channel and drainage modification of the New Forest Streams and noted that headward erosion could exceed 1 metre per year and volume of material eroded due to human intervention has been found to exceed 0.5m³ per metre of channel per year. (The summary of this article shows that this is the exception. Of 53 streams studied this rate only applies to 2 cases which improved after a few years – 24% showed no erosion, 40% deposition, 36% no change)
- Spoil heaps adjacent to watercourses act like flood banks which reduce the potential for over banking and flooding on to the natural floodplain. Conversely, they also prevent water from draining back into the streams during periods of high rainfall.

The habitat restoration works will restore the meandering course (and original dimensions) of the stream, and infill the subsequently redundant drain (The straightest section is basically the 1870 channel, and there is no alternative channel at that point.

Shepherd 14/4/12 12:11

Comment [6]: It is very likely that it became boggy because of previous drainage in the Inclosures upstream

Shepherd 14/4/12 12:11

Comment [7]: This suggests that the stream is heavily canalised, uniformly deep and wide, which is false: a detailed (e.g. 1:2500) survey and plan of where there are believed to be problems is needed before any overall judgement can be made.

Shepherd 14/4/12 12:11

Comment [8]: Where precisely are these a problem? Details required. Also spoil could easily be removed where it creates a barrier.

Shepherd 14/4/12 12:12

Comment [9]: But such flooding occurs already, many times per year!

Shepherd 14/4/12 12:13

Comment [10]: Erosion occurs where the stream is most constricted, not where it has been widened or deepened.

Shepherd 11/4/12 15:55

Comment [11]: Where are these locations?

Shepherd 14/4/12 12:14

Comment [12]: This is 10 cm depth across 5 m width, per year, so 5m in 50 years... where has this occurred on the Latchmore?

Shepherd 11/4/12 16:02

Comment [13]: Where are they, and where do they constitute an effective barrier?

Shepherd 11/4/12 16:03

Comment [14]: How are these known? What is the evidence?

The cross section is very wide there and it will require a lot of material to reduce the cross-section. Due to the artificially overdeepened channel, the stream is unable to self-mend, and without significant intervention to 'undo' the drainage works of previous generations, erosion of the stream bed will continue. (The proposed "restored" route north of the current course below Alderhill is not the 1870 stream: its age & status are not known.)

Shepherd 11/4/12 16:04

Comment [15]: Where and what is the evidence that this is occurring ?

For further information please refer to the **Wetland Management Plan**.

Shepherd 11/4/12 16:06

Comment [16]: This is only a generic document

3. Has an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) been completed for Latchmore?

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 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. In addition to this, site specific sensitivities, such as archaeology, rare flora and fauna are investigated on a site by site basis, and incorporated into the full restoration plan [We note with interest that such a plan has been prepared, but it has not been published. Please send us a copy...] produced for each site. The FC liaises with the statutory agencies throughout this process to ensure compliance with all regulations

Shepherd 14/4/12 12:23

Comment [17]: This is false: it says little/nothing about negative impacts.

Shepherd 14/4/12 12:23

Comment [18]: May we see the records & results of these please ?

This approach has proved successful to date [Where ? Since no monitoring is carried out, what is the evidence of success ?] with site sensitivities accounted for within the plan. Environmental organisations such as the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and the New Forest Association (and of course Natural England) have given their support of the restoration plan for Latchmore. [So far as we are aware there is no published plan for Latchmore beyond a set of conflicting small-scale maps. If it exists we wish to see it, please.]

Shepherd 14/4/12 12:34

Comment [19]: What is the nature of the plan referred to here ? May we see examples of these, please ?

4. I am concerned the restoration won't work

With 15 years experience and evidence from other sites [We are not aware of any monitoring or post-operational surveys, so would like to know what evidence is referred to here. The evidence that we have seen from visits to other sites is that there are often severe problems] we are confident the restoration will deliver natural stream habitats and associated floodplain dynamics. There are a number of reports from the Life III project that assessed different aspects of similar river restoration at the end of the project but perhaps the best way is to look at some of the sites previously restored:

Shepherd 14/4/12 12:38

Comment [20]: What does this mean ? What about bankside trees that have been felled ??

Milkham Inclosure: from the car park enter the Inclosure and take the first track to your left. Follow the mire and stream habitats west (downstream) – these were restored in 2006.

Ditchend Brook – 1km south from Godshill Cricket Pitch. This stream restoration site was completed in 2011.

Dames Slough Inclosure – stream and floodplain restoration along the Black Water completed in 2004.

Warwickslade – stream restoration 1km to the east of Brock Hill Car Park (off Rhinefield Drive), completed in 2010.

Markway/Ober Water – stream restoration just upstream of the A35 at Markway Bridge. The stream was restored in 2005.

Fletcher's Thorns – stream restoration 1km to the east of Blackwater Car Park (just off the Rhinefield Drive). This stream work was completed in 2011.

Howen Bottom – Stream restoration 1km to the north of the centre of Fritham. This channel flows in to the upstream end of Eyeworth Pond as was restored in 2009.

[\[FoL members have visited the sites at Ditchend Bottom, Dames Slough, Markway, Buckhard Bottom, Linford Bottom, Pinnick Wood, Milkham, Amberslade Bottom & Fletcher's Thorns, but do not agree that the visual evidence of "success" of these restorations is convincing: see report & photos on the FoL website at friendsoflatchmore.org \]](#)

5. Why is the drainage network in the Inclosure above Latchmore not being restored?

Some of the drainage network upstream of Latchmore has been restored. Sites such as Claypits Bottom, Howen Bottom and mires to the west of Island Thorns Inclosure, and to the north of Alderhill Inclosure, have already been restored. Stream restoration is still required in parts of Island Thorns, Amberwood and Alderhill Inclosures and these sites will be completed in the next few years.

[\[Noted, and agreed that this is necessary: but it is surely also necessary that the work in the upstream areas are done first \(because this will significantly affect the hydrology of the "restored" brook further downstream\) ?](#)

Leaving sections of drainage channel unrestored for several years is an intentional mitigation of the disturbance caused by stream restoration to in-channel species. Temporarily undisturbed sections of drain allow another opportunity for recolonisation from up and downstream. [_\(Is it intended to work on the section from below the Shade to the car park in future plans ?\)](#)

Shepherd 14/4/12 12:38

Comment [21]: See FoL report on this site on our website.

Shepherd 14/4/12 13:05

Comment [22]: This is a small rivulet: it is not at all comparable to Latchmore

Shepherd 14/4/12 13:12

Comment [23]: These are all minor works in comparison to the very extensive drainage within the Inclosures.

Shepherd 14/4/12 13:16

Comment [24]: This is not appropriate if the areas left are upstream.

6. There will be an estimated 400 - 500 lorries resulting in 800 – 1000 lorry movements to and from the site. I have concerns over the effects this will have on the local community and the minor road network.

There will inevitably be some disturbance [\[Indeed there will, and FoL consider that this will be a very serious negative impact of the project\]](#) as we replace the estimated 8,000-10,000 tonnes of material lost through past erosion [\[What is the quantitative evidence that this quantity of material has been removed or lost by erosion ?\]](#) We are liaising with the Parish Council to minimise this. Some material will be brought to a storage point in Alderhill Inclosure to provide materials for restoration towards the top of Latchmore Brook with Ogdens Car Park being the principal point for supplying materials at the lower end of the brook.

When deliveries start we can stipulate with the contractors our preferred routes, timings of delivery, impose speed limits etc. These will be agreed with the Parish Council. [\[None of these measures can significantly mitigate the very serious adverse effects of such a large number of HGV movements on lanes and tracks that are already inadequate for normal traffic: see report on the FoL website at \[friendsoflatchmore.org\]\(http://friendsoflatchmore.org\)\]](#)

7. Where is the material coming from, I have concerns whether the pH and the chemical composition will be different from that at Latchmore?

The material, principally hoggin (ungraded sands and gravels) will be sourced locally from areas that have the same geological formations and drift material, the pH will be compatible with those materials lost from the system. [\[This is likely to come from the Avon Valley. \(Hoggin is a mix of clay, sand and gravel: the siliceous clay component will wash out quite rapidly and is likely to have a serious adverse impact on fish and invertebrates\)\]](#)

Shepherd 14/4/12 14:16

Comment [25]: Avon Valley gravel will NOT be compatible, and is likely to contain calcareous material since the Avon drains the chalk downland to the north.

8. I am concerned over loss of habitat?

The stream restoration will restore the quality and functioning of the habitats present [\[Which habitats are expected to be restored, to what extent, and what is the evidence that this will occur ?\]](#), but will largely not alter the habitat types present. The valley will still support grasslands, heathlands, mire, and emerging woodland as it does today.

9. Won't there be an impact on nesting birds by machinery?

It was our original plan to undertake the works in June/early July in response to significant local concerns about disturbance to public access during the school holidays. As part of that original plan we had included survey and protection of any late nesting birds. However, in response to more recent local concerns we are now planning to complete the works in July/August. [\[The main impact on nesting birds is likely to come from destruction of their breeding habitat due to compaction of the ground by heavy machinery felling of trees and clearance of scrub \(not from disturbance while nesting\)\]](#)

10. I'm concerned over the damage the works will do to fish populations

We work with the Environment Agency to remove as many fish as possible prior to the commencement of the works; these are safely relocated to areas further downstream.

[\[We would like to see the written plans and schedule for this work, and also to know what plans have been made concerning invertebrates.\]](#)

Studies (Southampton University Prof. T Langford) have shown that fish in the restored streams quickly recolonise the meandering course.

[\[According to our information Professor Langford has not been consulted about this project, even though he has studied the Brook for many years\]](#)

11. I am concerned over the durability of the works

Restoration of similar sites completed over the last 15 years have proved very successful.

[\[Vague general assurances are not adequate as evidence. What were the indicators of success, how were they monitored, and where are the results published, please ?\]](#)

Sands and gravels will still move naturally down the catchment within a meandering watercourse as the stream self mends but this will be much reduced compared to the current straighten channel. There will be a period of consolidation and on occasions we may need to return when ground conditions are favourable to undertake any minor remedial work

Material used to completely infill the drainage channel will be sufficiently compacted to prevent erosion. [\[We have noticed with some surprise that contractors would be permitted to use up to 15% felled tree trunks: these will rot over time, negating the effectiveness of such compaction\]](#)

Shepherd

Comment [26]: Where will this be done ??

The examples presented by the Friends of Latchmore as 'poor examples of restoration' (Amberslade and Buckherd) at the recent public meeting, are mire restoration sites with incomplete restoration works downstream. These mires were eroding and the work to date has involved infilling dangerous plunge pools and thereby recovering the water table and associated mire vegetation (and underlying peat). Both sites have been successful in safeguarding the remaining mire habitat. [\[How has this been monitored and assessed, please ?\]](#) Inevitably, where the mire works have halted there is a drop-off and as such it is vulnerable to erosion. It was always intended to return to these sites to then undertake the supporting stream works downstream and both of these sites will be completed this coming summer. [\[FoL members have since visited a number of other sites recommended by the FC, and seen continuing problems in many locations\]](#)

12. I am concerned about increased flooding

There will be natural flooding on the forest during peak flows when water can dissipate across the floodplain. [\[Overtopping and flooding already occurs regularly in numerous places, and we have been presented with no evidence that the frequency is inadequate to maintain good environmental status of the grassland.\]](#) This will slow the flow compared to the concentrated release of water as it is now within the straightened channel. [\(Ditchend Brook still floods \(as it always did\) downstream in Ann Sevier's fields when there is heavy rain. A smaller stream plus floodplain inundation will still result in flash floods downstream – they may be just delayed half an hour, as for Highland Water and Brockenhurst.\)](#) The current situation results in increased erosion and transport of gravel that in turn can lead to problems further downstream. Gravels are deposited when the gradient reduces leading to a reduction in channel capacity downstream, which in turn may cause drainage problems elsewhere.

Holding water for longer on the forest and reducing the loss of material through erosion will help to reduce flooding elsewhere. [\[See above: it would be much more effective to increase holding capacity of the much more extensive tributary systems in the Inclosures\].](#) Water that spills out over the floodplain will quickly recede when the water levels drop.

The restoration work will conclude some 4 - 500 metres upstream of any adjacent property and the Ogdens car park. [\[This stretch is possibly the most significantly deepened part of the Brook, but is excluded from the works \(other than for scrub clearance ?\), presumably because it has the greatest amenity value: we do not contest this judgement, but note the inconsistent approach\].](#) The floodplain immediately upstream will become more active resulting in a neutral or reduced flooding downstream. [\(see above: the area involved here is too small for the effect to be significantly different.\)](#)

13. I am concerned about the interruption of flow

One of our main concerns is that with climate predictions we will see in an increase in winter floods and summer droughts. Slowing the flow through the restoration of the mires, that act as giant sponges, and restoring the shallower meandering watercourses will help to ensure the stream is more resilient to both summer droughts and winter floods. [\(This will unfortunately also create more boggy ground that will impede visitor access. If increased storage to improve flow regulation is a significant objective \(which is not clear\) it would in any case be much more effective to remediate the accelerated drainage of the upper catchment in the Inclosures](#)

14. I am concerned that the works will destroy archaeological features

The Forestry Commission contracts the expertise of a local, professional archaeological consultancy, together with advice from the National Park's archaeologist and a local archaeology group. [\[A review by FoL members with relevant expertise has revealed serious errors and inaccuracies in the reports on the archaeology of the area\]](#)

Once all the archaeological constraints are identified to the satisfaction of the NPA archaeologist, any archaeological features in proximity to the works area are marked on the ground and this information is conveyed to the various contractors engaged in delivering the stream restoration works.

15. What about damaging World War II history?

Latchmore is within the area formerly known as the Ashley Walk Bombing Range, which was active from 1940 to 1946. During that time over 2000 hectares were fenced off, for use as both a practice range and a high explosive range for many different World War II munitions - from small anti-personnel bombs of a few pounds in size, up to the 22,000lb 'Grand Slam' bomb.

Although there was some clearance work after the war, evidence indicated that there was still ordnance present. The FC is keen to safely locate and dispose of this before starting to excavate the natural stream as there is obviously a risk of disturbing unexploded bombs. [\[If the stream were left to remediate naturally, the excavation, access by heavy machinery, associated damage and the need to fell streamside trees would all be avoided\]](#)

A specialist contractor, EOD Contracts Ltd, has been engaged to undertake a non-intrusive survey. Five unexploded bombs were removed by the Royal Navy Bomb Disposal team including a 1,000lb Air Dropped Weapon, one 250lb General Purpose Air Dropped Weapon and three 11.5lb Practice Bombs.

The findings from this project have real historical relevance and, where safe to do so, remnants of ordnance will be passed on to the National Park Authority as part of their work to preserve memories and artefacts from the Second World War in the New Forest.

16. I am concerned about damage to the grassy hummocks

The access routes for materials transport will be carefully sited to ensure that a wide range of different features along the valley are safely navigated around (wildlife, archaeology etc). We are fully aware of the sensitivity of areas of grassland with anthills and will not be driving across such areas as part of the access route. However, we will need to make a single pass through some of these more sensitive areas with an excavator in order to prepare the natural stream channel. [\[This means creating a very substantial heavy-duty track, which cannot subsequently be restored to anything like its former state\]](#) As you would expect, reducing the impact of this activity in these areas will be of paramount importance. But equally we must be honest in saying that the restoration will still have a disturbance footprint.

Shepherd

Comment [27]: We regard this as impossible

17. How will the restoration work affect commoning, and the livestock that use this area?

The Commoners Defence Association and the Verderers are supportive of the scheme. There will be no immediate danger to the commoning stock and we will monitor the restoration works to ensure that if any issues arise these can be addressed. [\(Q2 para 4 correctly says Latchmore Brook was drained to improve grazing. Now it is planned to change it back again to improve grazing.. Both cannot be true\]](#)

The clearance of colonising thorn, willow and oak off streamside lawn habitats will restore lost lawn habitat, and help to maintain the balance of the mosaic of open and wooded habitats on the Open Forest. [\[This would be a credible and excellent objective but there is no reason to suppose that the work proposed would promote this\].](#) Fords and passageways used by commoners and Agisters to access and manage stock will be improved with the ford and associated soft ground along the edge of Alderhill Inclosure made good.

[\[This area is prime wetland habitat at present, that will be seriously and permanently damaged by the proposed work \(while most other crossings will be more difficult.\)\]](#)

18. I've seen heather bales with stakes and string exposed, won't this be a danger to livestock?

At Latchmore, this will not be an issue as the stretches requiring heather bales will be supported at the downstream end by the bed level of the restored meanders. [\[Where would these be ? Since no detailed plans have been presented the assertion cannot be verified\]](#) In most instances the heather bales will also be buried beneath spoil or hoggin.

We have experienced problems with exposed bales at transitional points where the gradient drops steeply but even in these sites there is no evidence there is a risk to stock.

19. I am concerned over increased poaching by livestock

On occasions we have had to fence small areas to allow the ground to allow consolidation. Predicting how stock will use the land and the effects on the environment are influenced by a number of factors and in common with management of the wider forest we address localised problems, such as poaching, in partnership with the Verderers.

20. There are higher priorities for habitat restoration work than Latchmore. Why are you not doing these first?

Latchmore has [always been a high priority site for restoration](#) as identified in the Wetland Management Plan for the Forest.

Shepherd 14/4/12 15:02

Comment [28]: These organisations (and/or their constituencies) have a conflicting financial interest since they receive matching funds from the HLS Scheme, and are therefore interested parties.

Shepherd 14/4/12 15:08

Comment [29]: We have been unable to find evidence for this: where is it, please ?

Under the New Forest HLS Scheme, each year a restoration works programme is drawn up, based on a number of different criteria. These include geographical distribution (we intentionally scatter this restoration activity across the Forest so that no single community is disturbed too often), type of work (mire or stream restoration), habitat types, costs and how severely the drainage is still impacting on the habitat.

21. How do you determine the original natural route of the stream and the evidence of past artificial drainage?

We use a range of evidence to assess where the natural course of the streams were prior to drainage activities. In particular we rely on a series of historic maps (spanning the last 220 years, [\[FoL members would like to examine these maps please: none of the maps that we have seen so far provide any relevant information except the 1870 OS 1:2500\]](#) in combination with remote sensing data (LiDAR) which provides exceptionally detailed levels of the surface of the valley (confirming the low point where the natural channel would be located).

[\[FoL members with relevant expertise would like to have access to the LIDAR height data and analysis to verify the interpretation, please\]](#)

We also have access to a range of aerial photography, going back to the early 1940s. Collectively this allows us to understand the history of drainage in an area and plot the historic, [\[natural route\]](#) of the course.

Site assessment work allows us to identify areas of spoil (from the previous drainage works) along with the remnant meanders of the natural channel (pre-drainage). The characteristics of the artificial stream channel can also be seen at Latchmore with a relatively straight channel, deeply incised and running to the side of the lowest point in the valley (drains are often dug off to one side from the natural course).

[\[FoL examination of the 1870 OS survey shows that much of the upper part of the Brook already flowed in its present course in 1870, and not in that to which it is now proposed to move it. On what grounds is it necessary or desirable to re-locate it after more than 140 years ?\]](#)

At Latchmore we have located the natural course of the stream [\[FoL is sceptical that this is meaningful or feasible \(see comment above\), but in any case wishes to review the data and interpretation on which this conclusion is based\]](#), and have clear evidence of the artificial drainage works in the past. [\[FoL does not contest that such work took place, but would like to see evidence and analysis to estimate the quantity of material removed. FoL also questions the benefit of attempting to reverse this by a further major intervention after many decades of natural remediation, which in many places has progressed almost to completion\]](#)

22. What consultation has the Forestry Commission undertaken and how are the plans approved?

Shepherd

Comment [30]: As of 1000AD, 1500 AD, 1750 AD, or when ???

Projects are consulted on with a range of stakeholders. These include representatives from Natural England, the Environment Agency, the National Park Authority, the Verderers, the Commoners Defence Association, the New Forest Association, Agisters and Forestry Commission Keepers, as well as local experts and specialists for site-specific sensitivities (eg ordnance, archaeology, birds, dragonflies, rare plants). All are invited to attend (or provide information in advance) an on-site consultation visit, at which the restoration proposals are examined in detail. Discussions are recorded and each representative's considered opinion is taken into account in order to reach an objective conclusion on the acceptability of the restoration proposal.

In addition to on-site discussions, information about such projects is given at various fora including the New Forest Consultative Panel (representing some 80+ Forest groups and organisations), the Open Forest Advisory Committee (representing some 10+ Forest groups and organisations), and through Parish Councils and other local interest groups when appropriate.

In April 2011 the Forestry Commission held a public meeting at Hyde Parish Hall to present the planned restoration work to local residents, and respond to queries and concerns. Over 70 people attended the meeting, with the majority of feedback received on the day that people felt better informed and reassured that this work was both necessary and would be undertaken with due care.

In response to further requests for information, in November 2011 the Forestry Commission held a public site visit to discuss the restoration plans on the ground. With 100+ people in attendance, the group walked some of the Latchmore area to view the current situation and discuss the planned restoration work. Supported by the HLS Partners the group discussed the effects on commoning, wildlife, public access amongst other issues together with the benefits and concerns.

Having completed consultations the final proposals represent a balance between a damaged stream and its associated floodplain habitats and mire catchments seeking to improve grazing whilst safeguarding wildlife, landscape and archaeological features. The plans are then presented to the Verderers Court for approval together with the necessary consents from the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commissions regulatory department (Forest Authority) for the tree felling.

At Latchmore the plans have the support of the following organisations:

Natural England
Environment Agency
The Verderers of the New Forest
National Park Authority
Commoners Defence Association
Hampshire & IoW Wildlife Trust
New Forest Association
Hyde Parish Council

Shepherd 14/4/12 15:29

Comment [31]: As stated above, the archaeological results are demonstrably wrong.

Shepherd 14/4/12 15:30

Comment [32]: FoL has requested access to the records of such consultations, subject to a Confidentiality Agreement if required, but this request has been denied.

Shepherd 14/4/12 15:32

Comment [33]: Hyde Parish Council has regrettably failed to consult its electors, and a referendum is now to be held to determine the true balance of opinion concerning the project.

Shepherd 14/4/12 15:49

Comment [34]: FoL members were present and consider that this summary is grossly misleading. We would like to see the official report of the consultation please, as we consider that the process has been seriously defective

Shepherd 14/4/12 15:50

Comment [35]: According to FoL members present, the walk never reached the stream itself

Shepherd 14/4/12 15:51

Comment [36]: FoL requests access to the records and reports of these discussions, since there is reason to believe that they have subsequently been seriously mis-reported.

Shepherd 14/4/12 15:53

Comment [37]: FoL wishes to see the formal Comparative Assessment of risks and benefits and the evidence and analysis supporting this conclusion, which it contests.

[So far as FoL is aware, none of these organisations has conducted any formal or detailed analysis or review of the proposals or the evidence upon which they are based, and their support for them is therefore nugatory.]

23. How will public access be affected?

All existing paths/tracks and crossing points will remain (FoL disagrees: many paths & crossings will become more boggy, restricting visitor access, if the other objectives of the work are achieved.) as part of the restoration proposals, and in the case of the ford crossing beside Alderhill Inclosure, the accessibility of this area will be improved.

We will need to close the car park at Ogdens for a few weeks during the course of the works, but it will then be reopened. We have no plans to permanently close the car park at Ogdens. Abbotswell car park will remain open throughout. We will provide appropriate diversion signage at the start of the 'no through road' to Ogdens so people are aware of the closure.

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Shepherd 14/4/12 15:59
Comment [38]: FoL understands that the period will be a minimum of 6 weeks encompassing all of the school holiday period.

24. Are you trying to create new areas of bog?

No, the purpose of the restoration works at Latchmore is primarily to restore the stream and adjacent floodplain habitats (grassland, heath and scrub woodland (this habitat is actually scheduled for destruction in order to improve grazing)). By restoring the natural meanders, these adjacent habitats will flood more readily but will not become bog. Instead the flood waters will rapidly return to the main channel after a spate event. This issue in particular was carefully scrutinised by representatives of the Commoners Defence Association and the Verderers before these organisations gave their approval.

Shepherd
Comment [39]: These will inevitably become (even more) boggy

Shepherd 14/4/12 16:02
Comment [40]: What is the factual basis for this statement, which is counter-intuitive ?

At Latchmore there are peripheral mire restoration works to be undertaken whilst on site. In these instances the Forestry Commission is not trying to extend the area of bog, but merely to protect what remains. The past drainage has caused erosion of the peat, which is ongoing, and the restoration works seek to stabilise this situation.

(Similar efforts were unsuccessful 13 years ago: what is the basis for assuming that they would be more successful this time ?)

25. Should you have any further questions please address them to 'Latchmore' and via email or post to:

enquiries.southern@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

or

New Forest
The Queen's House

Lyndhurst
Hants
SO43 7NH

We will then update this question and answer briefing so that your concerns and our responses are shared with others.

Thank you.