

# *Friends of Latchmore*

[friendsoflatchmore.org](http://friendsoflatchmore.org)

Postbox Cottage,  
Blissford,  
Fordingbridge,  
Hampshire, SP62HY.

To: Mr K. Penfold, Acting Deputy Surveyor, Forestry Commission

3 May 2012

Dear Kevin

## **Latchmore stream restoration project: public concerns**

Thank you for your letter of 30 April. We are interested to hear that you plan to seek the view of an independent hydromorphological expert on the status of the stream. Please let us know whom you ask to do this as we shall wish to discuss with them the issues that we consider need to be addressed.

I can however see no reason why this need delay a meeting with you to try to clear up some of the many issues that are outstanding. In outline, these are that we have asked, among other things, for this specific site, for:

- 1) The evidence that supports the overall assessment that the ecological status of the stream is unfavourable.
- 2) The evidence that its status will not continue to improve by natural processes
- 3) The precise ecological objectives of the the works to be undertaken
- 4) The evidence that the planned works will actually achieve these objectives
- 5) The nature and content of any planned monitoring of the status of the stream, that could demonstrate whether or not the objectives have been achieved
- 6) The precise legal basis for the assertion that no Environmental Impact Assessment is required
- 7) A copy of the reports of the site-specific studies that you state have been undertaken
- 8) A copy of any analysis of the balance between the damage that will be caused and the benefits that may be obtained

Regrettably, you have been unable or unwilling to provide any of this information. We consider that this, and the execution of this project in general, are clearly in violation of the DEFRA guidelines for the management of SSSIs (2003). Moreover, as I am sure that you are aware, DEFRA is committed at the highest levels to evidence-based policy and best practice, and the conduct of works within the New Forest SSSI under the HLS scheme is a lamentable failure to apply these principles by the Forestry Commission and the other DEFRA agencies involved.

We have also sent you a detailed and critical analysis of the Q&A document that you sent to us as a response to our initial statement of concerns and questions, but you have not yet sent us any response to these comments. We have also sent you our detailed analysis of the extent to which it addresses our questions, which concludes that it answers none of them satisfactorily, and that it fails to answer 20 out of the 25 in any way at all.

You will understand that we regard this situation as wholly unsatisfactory. Since you say that you do not wish to meet with us to discuss these matters, you now leave us with no alternative but to refer these departures from best practice and failures to implement relevant legislative requirements to the appropriate national and EU authorities.

You also state that you are unwilling to defer further work until these issues have been properly investigated and a satisfactory outcome reached. I must advise you that I fear that any attempt to resume the works this summer will result in extremely negative publicity for the New Forest HLS scheme and all of the DEFRA partner organisations involved, which as you know was something we hoped could have been avoided.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Shepherd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Professor John Shepherd CBE FRS (Chair: the Friends of Latchmore)

Cc Mr. Dominic May, Official Verderer  
Simon Hodgson, Chief Executive, Forest Enterprise England  
Miss Alison Barnes, Chief Executive, New Forest National Park Authority  
Dr Helen Phillips, Chief Executive, Natural England  
Dr Graham Ferris, Chairman, New Forest Commoners Defence Association  
Baroness Sharples  
Rt. Hon. D Swayne, TD MP  
Parish Clerk, Hyde Parish Council