

Friends of Latchmore

friendsoflatchmore.org

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Hampshire, SP62HY.

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

24 July 2012

Dear Kevin

Latchmore stream restoration project: work on the mires

At the Verderers' Court on 18 July 2012, you announced that the proposed Works on Latchmore Brook had been postponed until 2013 due to the recent poor weather conditions, and stated that contractors working on-site were nearly half way through the 20 week programme. You reported that five weeks of programmed work had been lost so far, but that you still planned to complete the Thompson's Castle mire part of the Works this summer, subject to favourable weather conditions, and that all interested parties would be kept informed before any further work started. Friends of Latchmore are still very concerned that there is any intention to consider starting work on the Thompson's Castle mire area in view of the continuing very wet ground conditions and the potential impact of such actions on this very sensitive site.

As you know there are outstanding major issues, subject to continuing legal action, which still need to be resolved. However, without prejudice to this action, I would like to set out some additional specific concerns relating to the possible resumption of work, in the hope that these can be resolved in parallel.

To avoid any further misunderstandings, we would therefore appreciate your answers, by Friday 3 August please, to the following questions:

A) Contractor's Schedule:

- i) How many man-days have been worked on the total Latchmore Works by all contractors, compared with the total man-days planned for the completion of the Works?
- ii) Has the Forestry Commission agreed to a revised timetable of mobilisation for the Thompson's Castle mire works, and if so, what are the agreed dates, and how long is the work planned to take ?
- iii) Do the contractors still plan to use the same declared holding areas and access routes for work in this area ?
- iv) What ground conditions will be needed before the contractors are authorised to access the area, and how will these be determined ?
- v) How will the very fragile ground be safeguarded ?

B) SSSI Unit 28:

The Restoration Plans of 2011 and 2012, and the associated Programme of Works, Method Statements, and accompanying maps all indicate that there is planned raising of the bed level of the channel crossing the lawns of SSSI Unit 28, which is classified as being in favourable condition by Natural England. In none of these documents, or any of the letters of permission from Natural England, or Letters of Consent from the Environment Agency, is there any suggestion that SSSI Unit 28 is part of the Works. What permissions do the Forestry Commission have for the work on Unit 28?

C) Archaeology :

The Official Verderer announced at the Verderers Court that it had been agreed with the Forestry Commission that all necessary steps would be taken to safeguard the archaeology in the Latchmore area. Earlier assessment by the New Forest History and Archaeology Group reported that only one site was correctly plotted and described; five wrongly plotted and described; and eleven not plotted at all. Five of these sites were in the immediate Thompson's Castle mire area, of which four were not plotted and one was wrongly plotted or described.

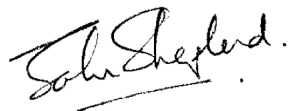
- (a) What actual measures will be put in place to protect the sites in this works area ?
- (b) are the sites now correctly plotted and described ?
- (c) what measures will be taken to ensure that the contractors do not damage them?

D) Other Information:

Is there any further information on the replanned work that we should be made aware of ?

I would appreciate your immediate attention to these issues.

Yours sincerely,



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

See next page for list of copy recipients

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