

Presentment – 18 July 2012

By

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Official Verderer, Verderers – Good Morning

My name is Michael Mayes. I am a mathematician, geographer, and land surveyor. I live in the Parish of Hyde, walking and observing in the area of Latchmore every day.

My Presentment concerns the likely impact of the combination of the proposed works at Latchmore Brook with the lack of “investment” in the upstream Inclosures.

There is no indication from all the documentation on these works that any consideration has been given to this critical issue which may have serious implications to the commoners and residents immediately adjacent and downstream of the works at Ogdens.

To recap - the objective of the Forestry Commission is to reconnect the stream with its floodplain, through more frequent overtopping. There is no information on what frequency of flooding is anticipated for given flows, or what profile, cross-section or wavelength is planned or expected for the new stream.

What is proposed at Latchmore is to infill the existing channel and move the stream to new meanders - described at various times in the project plans as “original”, “historic”, or “natural”. This is an impossible objective, equivalent to restoring the New Forest to what it was in 1079 when first designated a royal forest. The fact that there are no discernable or usable meanders on the north side, as the stream emerges from Alderhill, or any plans which determine what will be constructed is just one indication of the poor planning for these works.

What is not contestable is that the current channel supports most water flows. In fact the **new** channel may well support most water flows, as most of the time, the water flow today is simply a gently babbling brook in the gravels of the channel bed. In practice, the flows are either minimal, or the opposite extreme, of major flood flows, which must cope with the very rapid run-off from the upstream catchment. In general, the existing channel copes with most of these flows and only floods to a few inches across the floodplain.

So what is the likely effect after the Works are completed without addressing the upstream catchment areas? There are no surveys or analysis by any of the public bodies involved, so one can only make one’s own assessment - which I have done by frequent measurement on site and from available published data. It is not difficult to produce water volume calculations which provide results to a good confidence level, which make you realise there is a major issue.

Just fix in your mind a few figures:

The new meanders will only have a capacity of about 15% of the existing channel. Based on existing channel cross-sections and water flow measurements, flood volumes of at least 250,000 cu metres of water flow into Latchmore from Alderhill over an average 7 hour flood surge.

This means that flood volumes of 200,000 cu metres, previously contained in the existing channel must be spread across the floodplain. This will happen immediately it leaves Alderhill as the new meanders will have only 15% capacity.

Based on the area of the floodplain this will result in water volumes equivalent to a depth of 1 metre !!

This is not the end of the impact on the water flow.

All this water then has to re-enter the existing channel below new meanders west of Latchmore Shade, greatly increasing the prospect of flooding into Ogdens and the surrounding area, because the floodplain will not be able to absorb the water.

It can only stay there if it can be contained. It will not be.....

The only reason the water system now copes with the enormous quantities coming from Alderhill **is because it has a relatively efficient channel.**

To put it another way – the “new” meanders were appropriate to the water flows **before** the Inclosures were drained – not as the Inclosures are now causing flash floods.

These figures, purposely conservative to ensure that the results are realistic, illustrate, at the very least, the need for a serious assessment of the hydrology of these works, and indicate that the effect of the Forestry Commission not investing in the upstream catchment **first** may have unexpected consequences – possibly one of the reasons why the existing channel was deepened in the first place as the effects of the draining of the Inclosures took effect.

Thank you for your attention.