# Summary Report of Visit to Latchmore on 6th June 2012

5 representatives of FoL walked Latchmore Brook with 11 representatives from Natural England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency and the National Park Authority. They were accompanied by a senior hydrogeomorphologist from Southampton University, Professor David Sear, who had been asked to provide an independent view[1] of what should be looked for in any proposed restoration.

The main observations were that:

- Any intervention would have to be carefully thought through and justified in the light of what it was hoped to achieve (not yet clearly stated).
- There are visible signs (spoil heaps and wide or deep sections) of former interventions in many places, but it is not now possible to determine whether these were minor modifications or re-routing.
- The recent removal of tree cover is seen as creating unnatural conditions for Forest streams and likely to be particularly detrimental to fish and invertebrates with higher water temperatures in unshaded sections.
- During heavy flows, the existing form already results in water escaping down former meanders and out onto the floodplain – undermining the rationale for such a radical change in the stream.
- Some of the former meanders intended to be restored are too small for the likely flow volumes.
- Attention should be given to the intended target frequency for out of channel flooding (not known), for example, before deciding on the wavelength and cross-section of the proposed meanders in the sections where there are no suitable former meanders to reinstate.
- In the eastern section, the LIDAR profiles show little difference in elevation from the current stream, which is already shallow close to Alderhill, and where the stream overspills onto the floodplain on the north side during heavy rains.
- The overall conclusion was that Latchmore Brook consists of about five different types of characteristic forms, which all potentially need different treatment. It was agreed that Alderhill Inclosure will be a continuing source of rapid run-off until it is itself restored – probably in the next 10 years. The consensus was that the best solution would be to consider the catchment as a whole and that the Alderhill Inclosure should be restored first, thus avoiding potential damage and contamination to an already restored Latchmore Brook. A delay in any work on the Latchmore Brook itself would provide time to complete Alderhill first, and also to collect the necessary data to ensure that future work is designed to provide the best outcomes. Best practice would certainly involve appropriate monitoring and assessment both before and after the project.

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[1] Note: the visit was concerned with the hydro-geomorphology of the stream, and ecological aspects were not discussed in any detail on this occasion.