

# *Friends of Latchmore*

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

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To: Mr M. Seddon, Deputy Surveyor, Forestry Commission

17 January 2014

## **EIA/ES for Latchmore Brook Project**

Dear Mike,

We were very disappointed to receive your letter of 7 January, since you have neglected to address the substantive issues that we raised, and have instead made derogatory remarks about the Friends of Latchmore, copied to a wide audience. This is particularly regrettable since we agree that since returning to the New Forest you have hitherto been very successful in promoting good practice and better communications.

However I must take exception to your wholly unwarranted assertions that FoL

- 1) “would object to anything other than the status quo”
- 2) “continue to take an adversarial approach by
  - a. instructing Solicitors,
  - b. sending regular requests under Open Information legislation to a point where these may be considered vexatious
  - c. engaging consultants to complete parallel environmental studies without advance dialogue with the Forestry Commission.”
- 3) “now appear to be backing away from (constructive engagement)”

We would observe that

- your first assertion is wholly unwarranted, and we reject it
- we see no reason why we should not have instructed solicitors to help us to oppose actions that we consider to be illegal
- we have only occasionally exercised our legal right to request information that you have previously withheld under FoI/EIR regulations
- we know of no reason why members of the public should not engage consultants to undertake non-invasive environmental studies

I can also assure you that we are not “backing away from constructive engagement”. Indeed the whole point of my letter was that we consider that your proposals for release of supporting information would prevent effective and constructive engagement. Moreover you also imply that FoL might object to your intention “for all stakeholders to have equal access to the supporting data” whereas we would of course welcome this. Finally, it is really not at all helpful to bandy words like “vexatious” that have a special and pejorative meaning in law.

In the interests of returning to a more constructive dialogue, I shall refrain from requesting that you withdraw or apologise for your remarks. However, I do hope that you will reconsider the

points that I made in my letter of 10 December, and send us a more constructive response to them.

Finally, I am happy to say that we are able to accept all the amendments you suggested to our notes of the meeting, except for those to paragraph 11, which we can nevertheless accept in a slightly modified form. I enclose a copy of the amended version which I hope that we can now consider to be agreed and final.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Shepherd." The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

Professor John Shepherd CBE FRS (Co-chair: the Friends of Latchmore)

CC

Mr. D May (Verderers)  
Mr. S Avery (NF NPA)  
Mr. A Wood (Natural England)  
Rt Hon D Swayne, MP  
Chair & Parish Clerk, Hyde Parish Council  
Ms. L. Foster, Richard Buxton Solicitors