

Friends of Latchmore
friendsoflatchmore.org

The Old Cottage,
Furze Hill,
Fordingbridge,
Hampshire,
SP6 2PX

To: Mr S Avery,
Executive Director Strategy and Planning,
New Forest National Park Authority

9 August 2015

Dear Steve,

Amberslade Bottom / Broomy Inclosure (15/00045)
NFNPA Planning thresholds for HLS stream engineering works
Latchmore Brook EIA (14/00691)

Unfortunately, I find myself having to write to you again with a catalogue of unanswered requests on a number of issues, which call into question whether the HLS stream works are taking the concerns of the local communities seriously.

1. Despite sending you an e-mail on 15 June 2015, I still have not had an answer from you on my complaint about the Works at Amberslade Bottom / Broomy Inclosure (15/00045) taking place outside the approved timing stated in the planning application. Your response of 12 June had simply restated my point about para 4.11 in the Biodiversity Statement that *"The work will be undertaken during the summer/early autumn months....."* The Works instead took place in May 2015, when the lovely beech wood (protected) was in full bloom with bluebells, in the height of the bird nesting season, and during the breeding season for many reptiles and invertebrates. The stream is now a stone path like Ditchend/Pitts Wood (where, despite massive infilling taking place last year and being assured that the enormous stones used would not move, the heather bales are exposed again and there is no water).

A local ornithologist complained to HOS asking what they thought of these works taking place at this critical breeding time and the Head Keeper said they carried them out then as the ground conditions were more favourable for works. In fact it rained and a horrid mess resulted. Yet again this illustrates the complete indifference to dates specified in the planning applications.

As I stated to you in my e-mail of 15 June :

"The point with the Amberslade/Broomy works was that Mid May is still Spring and clearly not Summer early Autumn (that would presumably be August onwards) particularly as Bruce did say at the Consultative Panel on the 28th May that the FC would not be doing more work for the moment as it is bird nesting season. Surely this is a breach of the terms of the planning application, I don't think a private individual would be allowed to breach the terms in the same way (or I hope not)? If the documents are allowed to be so loosely phrased, it will be difficult to have any confidence in what might happen at Latchmore."

2. Another unanswered query is what is the threshold that triggers the requirement for planning permission for these HLS Engineering Works. This has been raised several times since 2012 in the minutes of the HLS Board and Verderers Court and, most recently, at the Consultative Panel. The fact this has never been answered indicates that all the works have been taking place without the FC having any idea of what the threshold is.

3. FoL have still not received any response to the request to Bruce Rothnie on 17 June 2015 to meet on site with LUC/FC to discuss our observations on the return flood-flows at Latchmore (copied to you, but included below for ease of reference), or the request seeking reassurance regarding the need for a full catchment hydrological modelling in support of the EIA following the recognition that Studley Wood and the headwaters had not been included in earlier modelling.

Copy of e-mail to Bruce Rothnie , copied to Steve Avery:

".....Friends of Latchmore (FoL) would like to take the opportunity to again raise issues on the Hydrological assessment which do not appear to have been addressed, yet are of fundamental importance to the accuracy and completeness of the EIA :

Hydrology - EIA catchment modelling

1. **JBA modelled flows for Latchmore Brook – Return frequency** : FoL have repeatedly raised the issue of the JBA 2 year Return flood flow baseline figure since it was first produced by JBA in their June 2013 Report. This was again commented on by FoL when it was repeated and expanded on in their Table 3.1 of the September 2014 modelling Report, as they were still at odds with local observations by residents of the area.

The Scoping Report had already identified that *".....further clarification will be sought from the Friends of Latchmore to determine how the hydrological information can be used."*

FoL last asked LUC for a meeting with the Hydrologist in my e-mail of 11 May 2015 , also copied to you, **but there has been no response.**

I have copied the relevant section for reference:

".....it does not seem unreasonable, bearing in mind the amount of time and effort and local knowledge that FoL have put into the comments on the JBA modelling, that Cascade could discuss their views on whether valid points have been made, and if not why not? This may remove existing misunderstandings on the part of Cascade which might otherwise cause embarrassment later.

With regard to the FoL observations of flood flow, FoL will need to discuss these with FC/LUC, but more critically with Cascade, to ensure that it is provided in a useful form and context, rather than just dispatching it to you with no interactive dialogue. The observations are mainly, but not exclusively, in the form of photos rather than significant amounts of "numeric data, as Cascade should appreciate, bearing in mind their inability to provide their own observations. What they do provide is evidence beyond reasonable doubt that the return flood flow data computed by JBA does not pass any test against local observation.

As the return flood-flow data is such a fundamental input to the whole ES and project proposal, it is our view that to leave any further communication until after the planning application is submitted is not in the spirit of cooperation. All parties should be working to remove misleading or wrong information before it is published. In conclusion, FoL would appreciate if you could arrange a date for us to meet Cascade to discuss the FoL observations and comments on the JBA modelling at first hand."

It is our view that LUC are probably making a serious mistake in the accuracy and completeness of the EIA if the LUC and FC Hydrologists do not take advantage of the current delay, and meet FoL at Latchmore to discuss at first hand these issues and to ensure that local knowledge is fully taken into account.

2. A New Hydrological Catchment Modelling Assessment : The Appendices of the JBA modelling September 2014 Report which were sent to FoL did not include any modelling of Studley Wood and other areas outside the narrow confines of the proposed works areas.

Whether or not the LUC Hydrologist decides that a new approach to the Latchmore catchment modelling is necessary after taking account of the local observations which call the current results into question, it appears that a completely new modelling exercise will be needed, as the two areas only recently included - Studley Wood and Sloden (recently mentioned by LUC in an e-mail) are fundamental inputs to the whole model, including the effects at the outflow point (Ogdens) from the proposed works.

Friends of Latchmore wish to be reassured that any hydrological modelling used in the EIA will not use the JBA Report, and will include a fundamental re-appraisal of all the sub-catchments of the whole Latchmore catchment. "

All the guidance for Environmental Statements indicates that it is an iterative process. Sarah Young of LUC has said this to us in correspondence but there is no sign that this is being carried out. The lack of engagement with local people is unacceptable, and all these matters should be discussed openly before the environmental statement is completed and published.

4. As the Authority for the points raised in para 1 and 2, I would be grateful for a statement of your position, together with the appropriate justification for actions which you intend to follow up as a result.

As the Competent Authority for the EIA, and the NFNPA being a partner in the HLS Scheme, I would also appreciate your assistance in arranging a meeting with the FC / LUC to ensure that the baseline flood-flow information included in the EIA is using the best available information, as stated in the last sentence of para 4.19 of the Scoping Report.

Yours sincerely,

Ailsa Farrand

(For Friends of Latchmore)

Cc (by e-mail)

Dominic May, Official Verderer
Bruce Rothnie, Forestry Commission
Alison Barnes, Chief Executive NFNPA
Julie Lunt, Natural England
Parish Clerk, Hyde Parish Council
Lisa Foster, Richard Buxton Solicitors