

Friends of Latchmore Press Release, 18 November 2016

The Friends of Latchmore welcome the decision by the New Forest National Park planning committee to reject (by a slender majority) the Forestry Commission's application to fill-in and re-route the beautiful stream at Latchmore. The plan to import 96,000 tons of hoggin and clay (enough to cover Wembley football pitch 8.5m deep) was strongly opposed by the four local parish councils, 341 objectors and many national and international experts.

Ailsa Farrand, spokesperson for the Friends of Latchmore, said: "Naturally we welcome the planning committee's decision to reject the application on the grounds that any possible benefits would be outweighed by the destruction of the existing vibrant wildlife. We are very grateful to our MP Sir Desmond Swayne and everyone who has supported us over the last five years. However, we fear that the HLSS partnership - which includes the National Park - will try to find a way back and spend the £1.5 million of European money which was to fuel this scheme. The planning decision is good news not only for wildlife and visitors to the Forest, and yes, residents too, but also for the quiet common-sense that recognises the way the New Forest evolves, and has evolved over many hundreds of years. The Forest is far better served by thoughtful, gentle stewardship and local knowledge than by the heavy handed imposition of European wetland targets inappropriately applied."

Notes for the editor:

Among the specialists and others opposing the planning application were:

Professor John Shepherd MA PhD CBE FRS, global expert on environmental impact assessments and climate change;

Tom Langton, independent ecologist with international experience;

Professor Adrian Newton and team, Bournemouth University - research on success/failure of wetland restoration in the New Forest (part-funded by NFNPA but concluded it had failed);

Dr Jonathon Todd, Natural History Museum, international project on fossil beds at Latchmore;

Dr J Hooker, Natural History Museum;

Steven Tracey, ICZN Secretariat, Natural History Museum;

Sir Desmond Swayne, MP New Forest West;

Julian Lewis MP New Forest East;

Edward Heron, County Councillor and Vice-Chair of the NFNPA;

Christopher Napier, Campaign for the Protection of Rural England;
Buglife.

A few of the many protected species at Latchmore:

15 red-listed (highly protected) birds, including Kingfisher, Lapwing, Spotted Flycatcher and Linnet,

Southern Damselfly,

European Eel, Sea Trout, Bullhead and Brook Lamprey,

Smooth Snake, Grass Snake and Adder,

Pillwort.