

Thursday, February 2, 2017

# Forest Journal

£1.10

The newspaper for RINGWOOD, FORDINGBRIDGE & VERWOOD

## Wetland project axed Campaigners welcome decision

By Katy Griffin

A CONTROVERSIAL wetlands restoration project at Latchmore Brook has been scrapped.

The New Forest Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme board announced its decision not to progress the planning application, after it was refused by New Forest National Park Authority planning committee in November.

A statement read out at the Verderers Open Court on January 18 said the HLS would allocate its money and staff time to "less controversial projects".

"The purpose of our HLS funding is to maintain and enhance the Forest, and we will therefore now be able to increase our financial support for an even wider range of work that will improve our priceless environment and

fragile ecology.

"We still firmly believe that the Latchmore restoration would have greatly benefited the condition of the Forest, and we will therefore continue to monitor the erosion of the mires and deterioration of the ecology of the catchment; it would be irresponsible of us not to do so. I am much in favour of river restorations in general, and the Latchmore project in

particular, and I am disappointed that it will not go ahead."

Campaign group The Friends of Latchmore welcomed the decision as good news not only for wildlife and visitors, but also for "quiet common-sense". "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."