

Contacting those Friends of Latchmore Brook with a continuing Interest in the New Forest

Peter Hebard peterh@realisations-uk.co.uk
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Dear All,

For the past year I have been coordinating the Brockenhurst Flood Action Group with a view to resolving minor flooding issues that nonetheless can regularly affect 6 of the village's access roads. We have also explored ways that existing FC forestry resource, HLS, Open Forest and Wetlands funding might be harnessed to implement "Natural Flood Management" as recommended by the 2006 Pitt Review and more recently re-iterated in the Autumn 2016 Flood Resilience Review.

The Lymington River was used as a basis for several decades of research into such methods by Prof David Sear et al of Southampton University and Brockenhurst could provide a perfect demonstration the principles. Since we do not have to wait for trees to grow, we could deliver very rapid results at a fraction of the cost of the Wetlands programme.

The latest techniques are very much more benign, primarily making use of trees that have already fallen and realigning them as part of ongoing forestry management, rather than the "Motorway Engineering" and major clearances employed HLS projects. It offers benefits for the community, business, commoners and wildlife at fraction of the cost.

Whereas my initial interest was in resolving Brockenhurst's road problems, it has been suggested that I should seek to form a wider New Forest Flood Action Group to establish a more constructive dialogue with the top levels FC, NPA, the EA, NE etc and provide a voice for the community as to the best use of remaining finance and ensure widest benefits for all.

We already have had some success in defining and implementing detailed action plans for our roads and have excellent relationships with Hants Highways, Network Rail and several Landowners but the EA, NPA etc believe a New Forest FAG would provide the best way to enlist the support of the FC and NE who have proved reluctant to engage or do what we ask, as I suspect FoL found.

If any of your remaining members would be interested in joining this highly positive and constructive venture, or failing that, offer helpful advice, I would welcome a call on either of the numbers below or an email contact through which to explore collaboration.

As well as being a long term resident of Brockenhurst, I have well established contacts at the highest levels in the EA, DEFRA, Cabinet Office and FC as well as several local MPs and ministers, as I have been active on

coastal and waterfront regeneration projects nationally and internationally for several decades and BFAG is a test case for the community partnership working and NFM advocated by the FRR.

They are very keen to see it work.

Best regards

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