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Date: 3rd February 2016

Mr Bruce Rothnie,
Deputy Surveyor,
Forestry Commission
Queen's House
Lyndhurst, Hampshire SO43 7NH

Dear Sir,

Freedom of Information Act/ Environmental Information Regulations

Harvestslade Bottom, Burley, New Forest BH24 4DF - Stream Engineering Works

This enquiry concerns a project within the Forestry Commission's Wetland Restoration Programme known as "Harvestslade Bottom" which was covered by Planning Permission No.14/00611 (as granted by the New Forest National Park Authority on 21st October 2014) for the "Replacement of approx. 320m of artificial drain with approx. 525m of restored meander; bed level raising for a total length of approx. 340m; complete infill of redundant drainage channel and the construction of one gravel stock crossing".

Please provide the following information: -

1. By comparison to the dimensions envisaged in Permission 14/00611 and Description of Works shown on Drawing 004 attached thereto, what are the actual figures ("as built") for:

- a) the total length of the stream which was infilled;
- b) the total length of the stream where the bed level was raised;
- c) the total length of the new route of meanders;
- d) the total length of new meander where the historic course of the streambed was found and restored and from what date?
- e) how has Section 8b been assessed bearing in mind that there has been no development of any channel along this route?"

2. In respect of the materials imported as part of the works undertaken on behalf of the Forestry Commission at Harvestslade and the surrounding area (including access routes etc.) in 2015:

- a) how many tonnes of hoggins, gravel, clay, and large stones respectively were used in order to complete the project?
- b) how many tonnes of hoggins, gravel, clay, and large stones respectively were actually added to the stream channels at Harvestslade in this operation?
- c) what was the source of those materials?
- d) were any other materials imported to the site?
- e) what measures were taken to ensure that all/any of those materials were not contaminated in any way that might adversely affect the integrity of the watercourse, its site, and the health of the animal & vegetable life existing there/passing through?

3. In order to complete all these works (including materials, labour, plant hire and professional fees together with all preparations, incidental repairs and finishings) and covering both direct costs by the Partners, and contracted out costs:

- a) what was the total cost of all the works undertaken?
- b) what were the total direct costs incurred by each Partner organisation ?

4. We were originally informed simply that a 'basic' cost of approx. £65,000 would be involved, which appears to have related only to the supply of necessary materials (as referred to in 2. above); observation of the works in progress seemed to indicate a very much higher level of total expenditure was ultimately

required:

How was reasonable value for money achieved in these circumstances?

5. Prior to commitment to this project, and during the progress of the weather-affected works:
What other approach(es) were explored in order to achieve the desired results that could have accomplished better value for money?

6. **With regard to the financing of the project:**

- a) **how was the required expenditure funded?**
- b) **from what sources did the monies flow**
- c) **along what path did they flow?**
- d) **what will be the final burden on the public purse?**

7. **Can you confirm that these works were planned on the basis that they would qualify for EU Rural Development support for non-productive Investments in Agriculture?**

In any event, and as an adjunct to Q5 above:

To what degree is the Cost-Effectiveness of the project calculated?

8. With regard to the various SAC, SPA, SSSI and Ramsar statuses accorded to this site:

- a) **what timetable has been agreed with Natural England to re-assess its "condition"?**
- b) **what improvements have been agreed to be necessary in order to achieve 'Favourable' condition,**
- c) **how will this be judged?**

9. **How have the criteria for the success of the project been set in recognised, quantifiable scientific terms as against the necessary equivalent assessment of site conditions prior to commencement of the works?**

10. **Have any consequent adverse effects of the completed works become apparent yet (downstream as well as on site)?**

11. **What was the justification for the reintroduction of brown trout into the stream only one month after the works were completed, and were the Environment Agency informed or involved?**

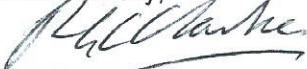
12. This Parish Council understands that, in accordance with the Habitats Regulations, all English competent authorities, **must** undertake a formal assessment of the implications of new plans or projects which are capable of affecting the designated interest features of European Sites before deciding whether to undertake, permit or authorise such a plan or project i.e. a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' (as set out in the NE HRA Operational Standard):

When was a Habitats Regulations Assessment carried out for this project?

13. With reference to the terms of Natural England's HRA Operational Standard and the relevant legislation and regulations:

Please provide the full record made by Natural England justifying that the proposed scheme was necessary for the management of the site and that no "appropriate assessment" would be completed.

Yours faithfully,



RGC Clarke, FRICS

Chairman of Burley Parish Council Planning Committee

Cc by email to:

Alison Barnes, NFNPA;
Dominic May, New Forest Verderers;
James Cross, Natural England;
Steve Avery, NFNPA
Clive Chatters, NF Consultative Panel
Pat Wyeth, NFDC;
Richard Frampton, NFDC;
Keith Mans, HCC;
Rt. Hon Desmond Swaine M.P.