

## WETLAND RESTORATION PROGRAMME

Further to the comments made in last month's magazine, we have now heard that the Planning Application in respect of the **Wootton Riverine Woodland, Avon Water** project is due to be considered by the NFNPA's Planning Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> June. This follows the Determination of the Park Authority's Executive Director that an 'Environmental Impact Assessment' isn't required because "*the proposal is not likely to have significant effects on the environment*".

You may wonder, of course, what then is the point of these major stream engineering works. Certainly, it remains the view of your parish council that this type of assessment of the potentially undesirable implications of the proposed works should be a pre-requisite of such an application - as indeed the law would seem to demand. Consequently, further action in this respect is being considered by BPC.

From our previous experience of the consideration of such applications by that Planning Committee, it must be expected that their members will ultimately accept the recommendations and reassurances given by those parties involved with the application; all of whom, it must be noted, have a vested interest in securing approval of the project. There is, however, one particularly notable feature of this project: this time much of the contractors' vehicular access to the site and movement of heavy earth-moving equipment will be visible to all those passing by over Wootton Bridge. The progress of previous projects has not really been viewable by the public before since these have taken place on generally secluded sites elsewhere in the Forest.

And for the foreseeable future, it is suggested that you do not plan to go walking, riding picnicking or paddling by Wootton Bridge from July onwards this year.

Meanwhile, the Forestry Commission has responded to BPC's request for more and better information with regard to the **Harvestslade Bottom** project under the "**Freedom of Information Act / Environmental Information Regulations**". Again, on the B.P.C. website, you can see their latest answers dated 11<sup>th</sup> May within the sequence of our original questions of 3<sup>rd</sup> February, FC replies of 29<sup>th</sup> March and our further questions of 29<sup>th</sup> April - all in a single document.

Regrettably, you are unlikely to find these answers very illuminating – indeed, it could be said that they display a masterly show of obfuscation along with bureaucratic warnings that either the required information is not recorded or our questions are not appropriately worded.

However, in our pursuit of the relevant information (that really should be in the public realm) your council is not so easily deterred...

Robert Clarke