

Leaflet circulated by a Saltwood Resident

Hi everyone! I hope you are all having a lovely Tuesday!

I just wanted to make everyone aware of the current situation in Saltwood along the old railway bridge leading to the secret valley. I think people have a right to know about huge dramatic changes happening in their local areas! I know this might look like a long post, but if anyone could take the time to read this, it would be so appreciated. I know Hythe and Saltwood residents are so caring about the environment, wildlife, and huge dramatic changes that have a large impact.

A lot of people have visited this beautiful area, and you will all know that it is a vibrant place for all forms of wildlife (including 11 different types of bats!). The Environment Agency currently have plans to strip the whole railway line of all its trees, killing all the wildlife, and taking away vital roosts for bats. They are starting their works on 1st September, and are chopping down a significant amount of trees, including young saplings and any form of vegetation. They are then returning at other points to take even more away. Their end goal is to have the railway line completely stripped and bare. They have deemed these trees as a risk that increases the chances of flooding, however the valley floor water has never EVER gotten as high as all the trees they want to cut down. We have proof from other consultants and contractors it is, in fact, safe and effective at damming water! (I have included that section of their risk assessment below in the photos I have posted). I have had conversations with the Woodland Trust who also state that trees are one of the best methods of damming/preventing flooding (here is a link to the website: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/.../british-trees/flooding/>)

Mrs Clark, who lives at the castle and owns this embankment, is doing EVERYTHING she can to save these trees, and the Environment Agency have been rude, intimidating, and used quite intrusive tactics to make sure these trees come down. We have been fighting this for over a year now, and they are getting pushier and pushier.

This next bit shocked us HUGELY...but they have not been transparent with us AT ALL, and have sent us documents with significant and multiple redactions. On Friday, we found out what was underneath these redactions; their own ecologist saying it would not be legal to take these trees down due to the thriving wildlife and the HIGH presence and diversity of bats. Depending on who we asked (the engineers, the project leaders etc), they claimed these redactions were due to multiple things.

One said it was down to “inaccurate or unimportant information”, another said “security purposes”, and lastly, “due to terrorism”. This new unreacted version states clearly “the trees and vegetation cannot legally be removed”, and yet they kept this hidden. It is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. And their plans are horrific.

If anyone would be interested in being shown by Mrs Clark the railway line and the trees the Environment Agency intend to chop down on 1st September, please do comment down below and we will arrange a day where she can do this. She would love to show this area to as many people as possible and make them aware of its importance.

If anyone has ever walked alongside castle, to the valley, or the field on the other side, you will know how beautiful it is. You will know how vibrant and thriving the wildlife is there, and what a tragedy it would be for this to all come to an end. The environment is absolutely vital, and I just want to do my bit to save it as much as possible. I felt so strongly about letting people know about this, because we all have the right to know. If anyone is willing to support this, it would be so appreciated.

If you feel strongly about this please PLEASE email local MP Damian Collins and voice your opinion. It matters, your voices are vital and so so important. (damian.collins.mp@parliament.uk)

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at SaltwoodEmbankment@gmail.com. I will try and answer any questions you have and will keep you updated on our progress.

Thank you so SO much for taking the time to read this, any support would be so appreciated. Hope you are all having a lovely evening! x