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email: info@saveradleylakes.org.uk

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Court battle looms over Lakes

Campaigners said today that they would take the battle to save Radley Lakes to the High Court after Oxford County Councillors rejected an application to register the area as a Town Green.

At a packed meeting, Oxfordshire County Councillors voted 10 to 4 to reject the application. They also rejected a motion to defer a decision until they could see the site for themselves, and voted not to take further advice on a disputed legal point.

Save Radley Lakes is asking its lawyers to consider urgently how the County's decision can be challenged by a judicial review in the High Court.

Basil Crowley, chairman of Save Radley Lakes said "Oxfordshire County Councillors have shown their true colours today. They had a free choice whether or not to protect the Lakes, and they voted not to."

More than 50 people demonstrated outside County Hall before the meeting, and Councillors would have been left in no doubt about the strength of public opinion on the issue. Among the demonstrators was prospective Conservative parliamentary candidate for Abingdon and West Oxford, Nicola Blackwood who said, "Thrupp Lake has become a stunning area of natural beauty and I think we should explore every possible solution before we deprive the people of Radley and Abingdon of its benefits."

In a message delivered to the meeting on his behalf, MP for Abingdon and West Oxford, Dr Evan Harris, expressed strong support for the application and urged campaigners to appeal if the County Council decided to reject the application. Dr Harris offered his full personal support for any such action.

RWE npower, operators of Didcot power stations, who are proposing to destroy one of the lakes by filling it with fly ash, have previously indicated that they support the democratic and legal process, and Save Radley Lakes trusts that they will not undertake any further works at the site until the matter is finally settled in the courts.

For further information contact: Marjorie White on 01235 216428 or 01235 530174,
or visit www.saveradleylakes.org.uk.