



**SAVE
RADLEY LAKES**

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Legal Challenge from Save Radley Lakes delays npower's work at Thrupp Lake

“Many deeply troubling questions and concerns”

At a planning meeting on Monday, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) planners resolved to approve, in principle, the three conditions outstanding on npower's planning permission to fill Thrupp Lake at Radley with ash. However, in response to a legal challenge by Save Radley Lakes, this approval must now be authorised by the Head of Sustainable Development in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning and Regulation Committee and the County Solicitor, but only when they are satisfied as to the legality of the environmental assessment process.

Acting on behalf of Save Radley Lakes, a Public Law solicitor wrote to the County Council last Friday, claiming lack of proper consultation, and that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is legally required for the new drainage works that npower propose. Save Radley Lakes is awaiting a reply on the points raised.

Dr Peter Harbour of Save Radley Lakes, who back in May pointed out that OCC was risking illegality because of the lack of a proper consultation and an EIA, said after the meeting, “I was surprised and disappointed that the proposed way to avoid illegality will now happen behind closed doors, keeping knowledgeable members of the public out of the loop and ignoring the need for an EIA. This raises great concerns because officers were not on top of the facts of the case today and we worry that, without proper consultation, harm will be done. We will have to discuss matters with our solicitors before the next step”.

In a separate letter to the Council, and in his address to the planning meeting, Roger Thomas of Save Radley Lakes drew attention to the huge pile of sand and gravel, several hundred thousand tonnes (worth maybe £5 million) that would be extracted from Thrupp Lake without planning permission. This would cause hundreds of lorry movements daily on a Radley country lane over the Sustrans cycle track. He also mentioned the damage that would be caused to the pristine waters of Bullfield Lake when Thrupp Lake is dewatered by npower, whether the water level falls, or is topped up using turgid water from the bottom of Thrupp Lake, as suggested by the Environment Agency.

During the meeting, Councillor Terry Joslin, who appeared to be speaking on behalf of npower, said the Sustrans cycle track is “safe with npower”, a major sponsor, and added “We won an award for it”. He urged for the work to go ahead, because, “I know for certain that electricity supplies are at risk if Thrupp Lake is not available in the coming winter”. In contrast, Mr Thomas told how npower regularly say their ash

stockpile is “nearly full” and that Didcot ‘A’ has managed fully to maintain normal operation throughout the past two years, despite Radley being unavailable.

At the same meeting, a petition was presented to the Committee, on behalf of Save Radley Lakes, by Radley parishioner, Lynda Pasquire, asking the Committee “to instigate a thorough investigation and review of the process and of the advice which Councillors had been given, that has led to the present deeply unsatisfactory situation over the planning permission for the Thrupp Lake ash disposal scheme”. Mrs Pasquire told the Committee "There are many deeply troubling questions and concerns about the Thrupp Lake application. You need to know why the process has been so badly flawed, so that nothing like this ever happens again. The people of Oxfordshire deserve nothing less."

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