



**Press Release 25 February 2008**

## **Develop long-term plan for Radley Lakes area, says campaign group**

The Save Radley Lakes campaign said today that it wants to help develop a long-term plan to restore the Radley Lakes area as a wildlife reserve and public amenity area.

Dr Basil Crowley, Chairman of Save Radley Lakes, said:

“The countryside between the edge of Abingdon and the River Thames should be the glorious setting of the town. In fact, as a result of more than half a century of gravel-quarrying, ash-dumping and landfilling, much of it is now badly scarred. Parts are a barren post-industrial wasteland. What we need now is a long-term plan to put that right.

“The campaign to save Thrupp Lake has shown just how much local people value this whole area. It offers peace, tranquillity and beauty just a few minutes from the edge of urban Abingdon. The area is also extremely rich in wildlife; – indeed, much of it is designated as a County Wildlife Site. It is also part of the floodplain, with a vital role to play in protecting Abingdon from future floods.

“Last week, RWE npower announced that its plan to fill Thrupp Lake with ash is being put on hold – possibly indefinitely. That is an important signal that the time is now right to start looking at the long-term future of the whole area. A comprehensive management plan needs to be drawn up. It will take many years to return the area to countryside, so the sooner we start planning for this, the better.

“Over the past three years, our members have studied the Radley Lakes and their surroundings in considerable detail. We now have a huge body of knowledge about the area, especially its wildlife, which shows just how ecologically valuable the area is.

“We have a tremendous team. We have substantial scientific and technical expertise available to us, and a huge amount of energy and commitment. The Radley Lakes campaign has shown just how much local people can achieve when they act together. Now, we would like to direct our efforts to helping secure the proper restoration of the whole area.

Meanwhile community groups remain poised to take robust legal action to try to secure the future of the lakes. Radley Parish Council is due to make a decision this week whether to go for a judicial review of Oxfordshire County Council's recent decision not to register the lakes as a town green. Other local councils, including Abingdon Town Council, The Vale of White Horse District Council, Oxford City Council and Kennington Parish Council have all indicated their willingness to give support to this.

The decision as to whether or not undertake this judicial review must be taken imminently, and it will need to be taken on the basis of the current understanding that there is still a possibility that Thrupp Lake might be filled with ash sometime in the future. Once started, the legal process will have a momentum of its own, and could be very expensive. Marjorie White of Save Radley Lakes said,

“We are delighted that RWE npower has said that it does not need Thrupp Lake at present, but we are anxious that the Lake is still at risk of infilling in the future. That is why people are proposing that the judicial review should still proceed. But, rather than see many tens of thousands of pounds expended on legal action, everyone, including RWE npower, should surely prefer that this money should be spent on acquiring and restoring the lakes for the benefit of the community. If RWE npower could commit themselves to not using Thrupp Lake at all, and to securing these lakes for the community, it would save everyone a lot of unnecessary trouble and expense. This would do a huge amount for RWE npower's reputation in this community, and more widely.”

**For further information** contact: Marjorie White on 01235 216428 or 01235 530174,  
or visit [www.saveradleylakes.org.uk](http://www.saveradleylakes.org.uk).