



**SAVE  
RADLEY LAKES**

[www.saveradleylakes.org.uk](http://www.saveradleylakes.org.uk)

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Supporters of a long-running campaign to save a beautiful Oxfordshire lake from needless destruction at the hands of the operators of Didcot 'A' Power Station are deeply disappointed by the decision of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Ruth Kelly, not to call in the planning application, by RWE npower, to use Thrupp Lake, at Radley as a dump for waste fuel ash, and to refer the decision back to Oxfordshire County Council.

A very small number of applications referred as departures from planning policy are actually called in, and the fact that the government has not called in this one is *not* an endorsement of Oxfordshire County Council's resolution to grant planning permission. The campaign group, Save Radley Lakes, feels that Oxfordshire County Council needs to be made more accountable to its electorate. During the very extensive public consultation over this planning application, a huge number of comments were received from members of the public, the overwhelming majority of which were against the proposal. Records, in the public domain, of meetings and correspondence between RWE npower and Oxfordshire County Council officers, show that there was, right from the start, a presumption that planning permission *should* be granted, and this presumption was maintained in the face of both public opinion and local planning policy. The decision was effectively taken, by officers, before the consultation started, and the planning committee, as is customary, summarily endorsed this decision at its meeting on July 10. The opinions of local people, combined with a great deal of technical evidence pointing out the harm that would be caused and the availability of better alternatives, have been largely ignored.

Save Radley Lakes has made a complaint of maladministration against OCC over their handling of the planning application, and this will now be investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman

The stated policy of central Government is not to interfere with matters under the jurisdiction of local planning authorities, unless planning issues of more than local importance are involved. In this instance, the conclusion is that there is not sufficient conflict with national policies on matters such as safeguarding the green belt, meeting national and international responsibilities for nature conservation, waste management and protection of open spaces, to justify taking the decision away from Oxfordshire County Council. That the issues raised do not relate to matters of more than local importance is a conclusion that Save Radley Lakes finds incomprehensible - the environmental problems such as CO2 emissions and waste dumping caused by coal fired power stations are clearly of national importance.

The Secretary of State is at pains to point out that, in making her decision, she did not consider the adequacy of the Environmental Impact Assessment produced in support of the application and considers this to be entirely the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council. Save Radley Lakes therefore calls upon Oxfordshire County Council to re-examine its decision in the light of this statement, and to give more careful consideration to the need for the proposal, especially in

the light of the availability of alternatives that have not been fully addressed by the Environmental Impact Assessment, and the exaggerations of the detrimental effects of not granting permission.

Save Radley Lakes would like to remind Oxfordshire County Council of its accountability to its electorate. The interests of 2 million electricity consumers would apparently outweigh the concerns of even the many thousands of objectors, but the presumption that many, if not most, of those consumers want their electricity at the cost of needless damage to the environment purely to serve the convenience and commercial interests of a money-grabbing foreign private company is unwarranted in the extreme. Oxfordshire County Council has failed to distinguish between the interests of the Company and its shareholders and those of its customers.

Very many people deplore this decision by Oxfordshire County Council. Save Radley Lakes has not given up the struggle.

### **Additional Information**

RWE npower, whilst paying lip service to being a 'good neighbour' and caring for the environment, is actually prepared to destroy a much loved, beautiful local lake and rich wildlife habitat by filling it with fly ash. They like to say there is no alternative, apparently forgetting that the Power Station stands just a few metres away from a huge empty gravel pit already licensed for waste disposal. They like to say that, without the ability to use of Thrupp Lake, 500 lorry loads of ash a week will hit local roads, apparently unable to work out that this much ash would fill Thrupp Lake in a year, not the nine years they promise it will last!

Given the political will, this ash could all be recycled into building materials. Technologies exist that would recycle ash whether wet or dry, even ash that has been previously dumped. Fly ash can now be turned into lightweight bricks with no waste i.e. no dumping. Using fly ash in construction materials would save unsightly quarrying of alternative materials like limestone and gravel, save carbon dioxide emissions and reduce the waste being dumped in landfill.

There will be massive new markets for building materials in the near future. The government is planning a huge house building programme in the South East. An estimated 2-3 million tonnes of "bricks and mortar" per year will be required to meet the demand for house construction; roads and other infrastructure could easily double this figure. There is also the huge amount of construction materials needed for the London Olympics. Where will it all come from?

Digging up our country side, importing materials and dredging the sea bed for gravel are all environmentally very unfriendly options. So is dumping ash in a pristine wildlife site. Using fly ash in construction materials could provide society and our planet with a win-win solution to both these problems. How very sad that the government has ducked the issue yet again!

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