



www.saveradleylakes.org.uk

email: info@saveradleylakes.org.uk

Press Release 01 July 2007

Public may not be allowed onto restored PFA 'lake'.

“Scheme not aimed at encouraging public access”

Information disclosed to campaigners battling to save Thrupp Lake at Radley in Oxfordshire from the clutches of RWE npower has shown that promises made to the local community by the German-owned energy company may not be what they seem.

RWE npower, who intend to fill the lake with waste pulverised fuel ash (PFA) from Didcot A power station, have attempted to sell the scheme to locals by reassuring them that a restoration scheme will result in a more diverse and ecologically valuable habitat, and their CEO, Mr Andrew Duff, no less, in a letter to Save Radley Lakes, has promised¹, “Following the filling of [Thrupp Lake], we are committed to an advanced ecological restoration plan and, as the owners of the lake, we will allow access for the benefit of the community once restored”.

In an interview on Radio Four's *Shared Earth* programme², Leon Flexman appeared to confirm this when he reassured the presenter, Dylan Winter, that their vision would be “even more amenable to the public”. He described a scheme where the local community would be involved in balancing public access with the ecology of the area.

In their most recent publicity literature³, RWE npower say that “Thrupp Lake will be restored to create a local wildlife area with access by the local community *once filling has been completed*”.

However, following enquiries raising doubts about the long term safety of the site, campaigners have recently received a communication⁴ from the Planning Implementation Officer of Oxfordshire County Council, in which the restoration scheme proposed is described as “not one aimed at encouraging public access”.

This will anger the numerous supporters of the campaign who have recently appeared as witnesses at a Public Inquiry to decide if Thrupp and Bullfield Lakes can be preserved as a Town Green⁵. Witnesses described the many benefits of using the area for exercise, bird watching, wildlife research, fishing and simple contemplation. Locals look to other lakes filled twenty years ago, which are still relatively barren and fenced off from the public by three metre high fences. They are concerned that a similar fate awaits Thrupp Lake, if their battle to save it fails.

“This is another example of npower’s spin” states Basil Crowley, chairman of Save Radley Lakes “their attempts to dress up this environmental destruction as something the community will benefit from is nothing more than a cynical marketing ploy – the people of Abingdon deserve to know the truth.”

For further information contact: Marjorie White on 01235 216428 or 01235 530174, or visit www.saveradleylakes.org.uk or the news pages at www.radleyvillage.org.uk .

Notes for Editors

¹ Letter from RWE npower CEO, Andrew Duff, to Basil Crowley, Chairman of Save Radley Lakes, dated 2 August 2006.

² Broadcast on BBC Radio 4, 22 June 2007.

³ Leaflet entitled “*Didcot Powering the Country*” issued by RWE npower in June 2007.

⁴ Email from R Dance (Planning Officer, Oxfordshire County Council) to R Thomas (Save Radley Lakes) 22 June 2007

⁵ There is a process underway to register Thrupp Lake and the adjacent Bullfield Lake as a Town or Village Green under the 1965 Commons Registration Act. See Save Radley Lakes Press Release dated 24 June 2007, and previous press releases on this topic.