



**SAVE  
RADLEY LAKES**

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## **Oxfordshire County Council's new chance to Save the Radley Lakes**

Oxfordshire County Council, which caused outrage in July last year when it approved the destruction of Thrupp Lake at Radley (part of a County Wildlife Site) to make an ash dump for Didcot Power Station, now has a new chance to save the Lake, say campaigners.

The County Council's Planning and Regulation Committee, which took the original decision on Thrupp Lake, is about to consider a planning application to extend the life of a huge landfill site at Sutton Courtenay, and to allow up to 350,000 tonnes of waste to be brought to the site by lorry every year between now and 2021.

Save Radley Lakes campaigners say that ash which RWE npower wants to dump in Thrupp Lake could be disposed of at the Sutton Courtenay Landfill Site instead.

Dr Basil Crowley of Save Radley Lakes says:

**"The Sutton Courtenay Landfill Site is right beside Didcot Power Station. There is a huge amount of space there – about 8 million cubic metres. In fact, the space is so big that the operators of the Landfill Site, WRG Ltd, can't fill it up quickly enough. Their existing permission runs out in 2012, and they are asking the County Council to extend that to 2021. They are also asking to increase the amount of waste imported by lorry to 350,000 tonnes per year, every year, for the next 14 years. That's 150,000 tonnes per year more than what they are permitted to import between now and 2012."**

**"The 8 million cubic metres of landfill space at Sutton Courtenay is about nine times the space needed to take all the ash that RWE npower wants to dump in the Thrupp Lake County Wildlife Site. The pipeline, which has been used in the past to pump the ash from Didcot to Radley, actually runs right through the Sutton Courtenay Site."**

**"And what's more, WRG already uses ash from Didcot Power Station as part of the landfilling process – it's used to cover up the household waste. In 2006, RWE npower disposed of 100,000 tonnes of Didcot's ash at Sutton Courtenay. WRG says that if it didn't use Didcot ash for this purpose, it would have to bring in other material by road."**

**“There is absolutely no doubt that, between them, WRG Ltd and RWE npower could find a way to dispose of Didcot’s ash at Sutton Courtenay, if they wanted to. And there’s the rub – RWE npower doesn’t want to, simply because it would cost them more; or WRG wouldn’t want to because they would make less.”**

**“In July last year, RWE npower wrote to planning officers and said that disposing of Didcot’s ash at Sutton Courtenay would cost RWE npower about twice as much as dumping it in Thrupp Lake. That letter wasn’t revealed to the County Council’s Planning Committee at its meeting on 10 July 2006, when they decided to allow RWE npower to destroy Thrupp Lake.”**

**“We put a suggestion to County Council planning officers earlier this year for a scheme which would provide an incentive for WRG Ltd to take more waste ash from Didcot Power Station, and which would also avoid unnecessary increases in the number of lorry movements to Sutton Courtenay.”**

**“This new planning application for the Sutton Courtenay Landfill Site gives the County Council the chance to save Thrupp Lake, and at the same time to ensure that unnecessary lorry traffic is kept off Oxfordshire’s roads.”**

**“In this environmentally conscious age, the people of Oxfordshire find it very difficult to understand why – when there an 8 million cubic metre landfill site right beside the power station – 500,000 tonnes of ash should have to dumped in a County Wildlife Site five miles away instead.”**

**The other issue before the Committee concerns RWE npower’s response to the Conditions Precedent attached to the planning permission to fill Thrupp Lake. These are the conditions attached to the January 2007 planning permission that RWE npower must comply with *before* any development can commence. The conditions require that npower set out in detail how they intend to carry out certain aspects of their operations. These include the protection of retained wildlife habitats, fish rescues, dewatering, control of traffic to minimise disruption to the public using the byway, site drainage, noise and dust minimisation, restoration of the site, etc. There are 10 such conditions and they are of sufficient complexity that it has taken 4 months to get to where we are now.**

**Basil Crowley says “It is important that Oxfordshire County Council consider RWE npower’s responses to these conditions carefully as they could affect the impact of the proposal on the area for decades to come.”**

**“This will be an important day for both the Radley Lakes and the people of Sutton Courtenay. It is our fervent wish that Oxfordshire County Council will use all the powers at its disposal to make the parties involved adopt a solution that is to everyone’s benefit. It is a simple choice between win-win or lose-lose: the ash, if it has to be thrown away at all, should go to Sutton Courtenay thus saving both Thrupp Lake and lots of extra lorries on the roads. It is also Oxfordshire’s chance to make amends for ignoring public opinion and allowing npower to destroy Thrupp Lake in the first place.”**

**“Nevertheless councillors will have to consider these matters on their separate merits, which does not make the task of trying to deflect these two huge**

commercial entities into cooperating, for the benefits of the communities in which they operate, an easy one.”

RWE npower has currently suspended work on the Thrupp Lake site. This, they say, is due to the presence of nesting birds. They have said that they will recommence work later in the summer. Meanwhile more birds have moved in to join the original intrepid pair of nesting coots to breed on newly cleared islands on the lake. These include Little Ringed Plovers, which are a protected species, and Oystercatchers.

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

## Notes for Editors

The Sutton Courtenay Landfill Site is operated by Waste Recycling Group Ltd (WRG). They applied, in late 2006, to Oxfordshire County Council, to vary conditions on the existing planning permission for the landfill site, granted in 1996. One condition requires the site to close by 31 December 2012. The current planning application says that, when WRG applied for planning permission in 1996, they underestimated the amount of space at Sutton Courtenay by 4.6 million cubic metres.

Because the landfill site is so much larger than originally thought (there is around 8 million cubic metres of space remaining) and because the amount of waste going to landfill is falling as a result of recycling policies, WRG is asking Oxfordshire County Council to extend the life of the site from 2012 until 2021.

In addition, they are applying to increase the amount of waste transported to the site by road by 150,000 tonnes per year beyond what would currently be permitted. At present, WRGL import 350,000 tonnes per year by road. From 2007 this would have been reduced to 200,000 tonnes per year. The application requests that this be maintained at 350,000 tonnes per year.

According to npower’s planning permission, the ash from the Power Station would be transported to Radley by an existing pipeline, which does not require the use of lorries. The pipeline crosses the Sutton Courtenay Landfill site and could easily be used to deliver the ash there. Alternatively, any lorries used to deliver this ash would travel directly from the power station and would not go onto public roads.

The Officers’ Reports on these matters are due to be published imminently and will be found at <http://tinyurl.com/3yl3gq> by following the link for May 21 2007.