

Friends of Radley Lakes comments

*General*

Friends of Radley Lakes (FRL) is a community-based group which exists to represent the views of all those who care about the Radley Lakes and their future. FRL has around 350 members, the great majority of them residents of Abingdon or Radley. FRL grew out of the Save Radley Lakes group, which campaigned between 2005 and 2008 to prevent the destruction of Thrupp and Bullfield Lakes. Since then, FRL has taken an active interest in the future planning and management of the wider Radley Lakes area, and members of FRL have contributed to the production of the Neighbourhood Plan.

We warmly welcome the Plan's aspirations and strategy for the future of the Radley Lakes area. We believe that, with the right management, the Radley Lakes area could become an exceptional wildlife and recreational area. The 'extractive and industrial' phase of the area's history is now gradually coming to an end. Given this, and given (1) the condition of much of the land (e.g. former fly-ash pits) and (2) its location in the floodplain, both of which largely preclude either agricultural use or development, uses based on nature conservation and quiet recreation are most appropriate for the long-term future of the area. In particular, the diversity of habitats present means that, properly managed, Radley Lakes could become an outstandingly rich wildlife site.

*Comments on policies*

CA.9 – we suggest adding, after "conservation and amenity groups", the words "in particular, Friends of Radley Lakes and the Earth Trust". FRL is the only body which is specifically dedicated to the area, while Earth Trust currently leases and manages Thrupp Lake, and is already undertaking management work on other parts of the Lakes area.

PP.11 – we suggest amending the final sentence as follows: **Prompt** enforcement action will be taken against unlawful **uses or** development **so that continuation of these is prevented and** so that permissions are not created by default.

PP.12 – we suggest amending the text to read "towards Audlett Drive **or Barton Lane**". We think that an access from Audlett Drive would be preferable and more achievable, but we think it would be a good idea to keep both options open. The suggested wording also aligns the text of the policy with the legend of Map 5. (We note that, at 4.6.2, Access, the text does refer "access towards Audlett Drive, either directly or via Barton Lane". We think that for clarity it would be best to mention Barton Lane in the policy itself, especially given the way the options are depicted on Map 5.)

*Other comments*

We support and endorse the comments of Abingdon Naturalists Society (dated 10 February 2017) on the Plan. We are particularly anxious to ensure that the wildlife-rich areas of Orchard Lake and Calfrey's March are protected from future mineral extraction.

4.6.1 (second paragraph, final sentence) – amend to "no minerals have been extracted since about 2004". (The 'Barton Lane quarry', now known as Longmead Lake, was extracted in the period 1997 to 2004.)

4.6.1 (third paragraph) – the issues mentioned here arose during the period of mineral extraction (not “Since the extraction of minerals”). We suggest amending the wording and section sub-headings as follows:

“The extraction of minerals has been accompanied by the following:

- Unrelated commercial and industrial activity
- The emergence of potential for nature conservation and quiet recreation
- Significant traffic and access issues, now arising from uses not connected with mineral extraction in the area”

4.6.2, Other industrial and commercial uses (first paragraph) - we suggest amending the wording to “the ~~default~~ position under existing permissions is”. Use of the word ‘default’ suggests that there are one or more other positions under the existing permissions. This is not so – they only require restoration to greenfield.

4.6.2, Other industrial and commercial uses (second paragraph) – we suggest amending the final sentence to “it would be preferable to implement the current planning requirement of return to greenfield” (see previous comment).

4.6.2, Access – we have some doubts about the proposal to close Thrupp Lane to vehicular traffic (at ‘point 9’ as shown on Map 5). This is for two reasons. First, a number of users of the area do drive further down Thrupp Lane, and along the BOAT on the east side of Thrupp Lake (e.g. fishermen). Second, a significant number of people now travel to the Lakes by car down Thrupp Lane, generally parking in Thrupp Lane at its junction with the BOAT. As there is very little space for safe parking on Thrupp Lane to the north of ‘point 9’, people wishing to access the Lakes by car would (1) be deterred from visiting at all, or (2) be forced to drive round Audlett Drive and gain access via Barton Lane, or (3) park unsafely to the north of ‘point 9’. Some further thought needs to be given to this.

We hope that these comments are helpful. If you have any queries on them, or would like to discuss any of them with us, please contact me. We would be pleased to be kept informed about the future progress of the plan.

Roger Thomas  
Chairman of Friends of Radley Lakes

10 February 2017