

**RADLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

**RADLEY LOCAL LIAISON GROUP (RWE NPOWER)**

**NOTES OF MEETING AT DIDCOT 'A' POWER STATION  
WEDNESDAY, 7 JANUARY 2009, AT 7.30PM**

**PRESENT:** Mr John Rainford )  
Mr Phil Noake ) RWE Npower  
Dr Steve Waygood )  
  
Dr B Crowley )  
Mr C Henderson )  
Mr G Rogers ) Radley Parish Council  
Mrs J Standen )  
Miss S E Raven )

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Nutt.

**2. LIAISON GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The amended Terms of Reference were accepted.

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 19 AUGUST 2008**

**3.1 Corrections to notes:**

- (a) 4.1 The last line should be amended to "... this coming winter."
- (b) 4.5 The last sentence should be amended to "... at least ten similar power stations to Didcot were competing for the available business."
- (c) 4.6 "Waste Disposal Licence" should read "Waste Management Licence".
- (d) 5.2 (g) The last sentence should be deleted.

**3.2 Matters arising:**

- 5.2 (b) Injunction: Mr Rainford reported that this matter was coming to a conclusion.
- 5.2 (d) Bat Boxes: Mr Rainford reported that the bat boxes were still in place and would remain there.
- 5.2 (h) Production Figures: It was agreed that the figures were no longer needed.

#### **4. DIDCOT POWER STATION – RADLEY OPERATIONAL UPDATE**

- 4.1 Mr Rainford reported that progress was being made in relation to Phase I. Discussions were taking place with the Environment Agency in relation to surrendering the Waste Management Licence, and work was in hand to complete the planning application which requested variations to the surface water drainage arrangements.

More work had been undertaken on the visibility of the fencing around the Phase 1 site, and most of the fencing was covered by vegetation. The fencing would be left for the landowner, and the future type of fencing was a matter for the Oxfordshire County Council and the Parish Council to discuss with Mr Attia.

In relation to the Old Drovers Road, nothing could be done about opening the road whilst the Waste Management Licence was in effect for Phases I and II, but in the longer term (five years) it may be possible to do something once the Licence had been surrendered and subject to the agreement of the landowner. At the moment the gate was stopping vehicular access into that area.

- 4.4 Dr Waygood reported that the new restoration plans for Lakes H/I had been agreed with Mr Curtis and a section 73 planning application should be made in the next few weeks. This would set out a more ecological revised restoration. However, at this stage Mr Curtis was not willing to allow his land to be included in the plans for a wildlife area, although it was reported that Mr Charles Dockar-Drysdale had agreed to his land being included in this area.

In relation to the concerns about ground water levels in the area, the ditch would be restored and rerouted towards the later part of the restoration plan.

- 4.5 In relation to Lake E, the power station had been in discussion with the OCC regarding the restoration of this area, and a document setting out a revised restoration plan would probably be submitted within six months.

- 4.6 The buildings on Lake G would be removed in next few weeks so lorries would be going in and out of the site.

- 4.7 Sandles and Thrupp Lake:

(a) Sandles and Thrupp Lake were in the ownership of RWE Npower and a lot would depend on the policies of the Property Department. The Conservation Area at Sutton Courtenay was leased to BBOWT for twenty five years, and it was envisaged that RWE would enter into a similar long term arrangement with a wildlife body in relation to Thrupp Lake and Sandles.

(b) The newt fence would be removed as soon as there was no likelihood of disturbing hibernating species, probably mid-March. It would be replaced with a post and wire fence demarking the boundary of the

proposed wildlife site. This was to be the sole purpose of the fence. A site visit would be arranged about the time the new fence was to be erected, and it was also stated that this would be an appropriate time to carry out the litter pick.

- (c) Other restoration work would have to be agreed with the OCC, which would take time, but they were considering converting the access point near Sandles into a viewing platform, rather than demolishing it.
- (d) It was envisaged that the area would be managed by an appointed wildlife trust, which would enter into partnership with RWE Npower. Mr Rainford emphasized that any trust would have to have a significant track record so that they could bring something to the partnership and have an ability to secure substantial funding. There was discussion on suitable wildlife groups and it was noted that both Northmoor Trust and BBOWT had expressed interest. In view of this, it was likely that it would be put out to competitive tender, where interested groups would be invited to put in a business plan setting out their vision for the site, the involvement of local people and groups, the availability of the site to local people, possible options for the use of Sandlers, etc. RWE Npower was still contemplating how to deal with the matter, and they would consult further on this with the Parish Council, through the Radley Local Liaison Committee. They wanted to consider all alternatives and anticipated that it would take about a year to get the scheme up and running.
- (e) There was discussion on the involvement of the local community in the venture. The Parish Council representatives stressed the need for the involvement of the local community especially in view of the wording of the announcement which indicated that the site had been gifted to the local community, and queried the involvement of members of Radley Parish Council's Nature Conservation Group, Abingdon Town Council, Abingdon Naturalist Society, and interested local people.

Mr Rainford pointed out that they had deliberately used the word "effectively gifted" in their announcement, and this did not mean that the site was to be "given" to the community. It is envisaged that the likely arrangements would be similar to those in place for the Sutton Courtenay nature reserve, which too had been "effectively gifted" to the local community and has been in existence for nearly 40 years. Mr Rainford indicated that he anticipated that liaison/consultation with the local community would be through the Radley Local Liaison Committee, which was a proven method of communication. It would obviously be necessary to meet more regularly throughout the next year so that the Parish Council could be consulted on the specification for tendering.

It was confirmed that Dr Waygood would be developing the specification and would be liaising with the Parish Council on this before March.

(f) It was noted that the Forestry Commission had put a restocking order on the Power Station. Cr Crowley requested that two of the islands near the centre of the lake be cleared again of vegetation, before the start of the nesting season, to allow Common Terns to continue nesting there. These birds [which were not “common”] moved onto the islands when they were cleared in 2007. Npower expressed concern as this was contrary to the restocking order and the tree planting scheme already agreed with the Forestry Commission. However, they would put the matter to their ecologist.

4.7 There was discussion on the future of the pipeline between Didcot and Radley, and it was confirmed that all the pipe work in Radley (north of the river) would be dismantled and that the pipeline south of the river would be decommissioned (plugged at both ends) and left in situ.

## **5. RADLEY PARISH COUNCIL – UPDATE**

5.1 The Parish Council indicated that the news that the area would be gifted to the community was received with great delight locally, and that the local community was looking forward to hearing more about the way this would be implemented. However, local people were continually asking Councillors questions on how this would be managed, and it would be necessary for the Parish Council to be a buffer between the Power Station and the local people.

5.2 Clarification on the role of the Radley Liaison Committee was sought in view of the cessation of pumping PFA. It was considered that the restoration of the area would take 4-5 years and with the development of the wildlife area and the partnership arrangement with Npower, the need for the Radley Liaison Committee would be long term, although the Terms of Reference might need to be reviewed.

5.3 It was confirmed that everything within the new fencing would be the site of the new wildlife area. It was requested that the site visit should coincide with the provision of the new fence, and it was agreed that it would be appropriate for a litter pick to take place around the same time.

5.4 The Parish Council stressed the importance of safeguarding the nesting of the Common Terns.

5.5 The need for people like Dr Robert Eeles and Mrs Marjorie White, who had great ecological expertise and local knowledge, to be involved on the Management Committee was stressed. A list of local groups with a possible interest was circulated.

- 5.6 The Parish Council was considering what action was necessary in relation to the Town Green and the Judicial Review. Mr Rainford indicated that he thought the possibility that the area might become a Town Green was contrary to the wildlife proposals, and might affect the interest of local wildlife bodies.

**6. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT LIAISON GROUP**

**IT WAS AGREED** that:

- (a) The Parish Council would be consulted before March on the specification for the partnership.
- (b) A site meeting would be held in March and would be timed to see the new fence line.
- (c) The next Radley Local Liaison Committee would be held not later than October.