

Green light for reservoir despite objections from nature campaigners

THE final hurdles to creating an 8.7 billion litre storage reservoir spanning 160 hectares between Leigh Park and Rowlands Castle on ancient woodland have been overcome despite a campaign to stop it.

Portsmouth Water has been given the green light to build Havant Thicket Reservoir by Havant Borough and East Hampshire District Councils because it borders land in both the local authorities.

The Stop the Chop! campaign group launched a petition against the reservoir, which will store water on behalf of Southern Water and will be diverted outside of Hampshire, but was unsuccessful.

The detailed planning application for the reservoir, along with a separate one for the pipeline which is needed to fill and remove water to supply to customers, was considered and granted permission following hours of debate by councillors at the two neighbouring authorities.

The plan to build a reservoir, together with a visitor and education centre, picnic and play area, along with parking facilities for approximately



The proposed layout of Havant Thicket Reservoir 200 vehicles, has been an ambition in the borough for many years.

The reservoir, once complete will create a permanent wetland with bird watching facilities.

Bob Taylor, Chief Executive Officer of Portsmouth Water, said: 'As the nature of the existing site will change, we've worked with environmental regulators to create an extensive programme to support the environment on and around the site.

'This includes the creation and improvement of around 200 hectares of woodland and pasture to support wildlife, and the creation of a 10-hectare wetland on the reservoir's northern shore, which will be a major boost for threatened bird species.

'We remain committed to working with communities to make the very most of the reservoir's potential to improve the lives of local people in particular – including opportunities for accessible leisure, education, sharing skills, creating jobs and supporting the local economy.'

During the meetings, held at both local authorities, concerns were heard from Stop the Chop!, The Woodland Trust, Havant Climate Alliance, Friends of the Earth and residents about the removal of ancient woodland.

Officers from Natural England and the Environment Agency said they are satisfied that, provided the mitigation and compensation strategy is secured, and fully implemented, the scheme would deliver a suitable compensation strategy for the loss of irreplaceable habitats.

Havant Thicket Reservoir could open fully to the public in 2029.

Documentary on effects of reservoir on the environment



A FILMMAKER is putting together a documentary on the effects of the planned Havant Thicket Reservoir on wildlife and the community.

Frankie Murdoch, from Emsworth, wants to record the opinions of the community in the build-up to the controversial reservoir being built.

She said: 'I am keen to have many voices and have started photographing and filming the area and recording sounds.

'I am hoping the work can be used to raise awareness of the wider impacts of developments and the destruction of landscapes but also serve as a record of personal experi-

ences with the landscape.

'I would also like to create portraits that could illustrate the interviews.'

Filming and voice recordings will take place between August 1st and 14th. Everyone who takes part will be given a free print of their portrait.

Frankie will be experimenting with alternative photography techniques, developing the film with seaweed rather than chemicals as a way of demonstrating that she can work in environmentally friendly ways.

Everyone's views are welcome –for and against the reservoir. To take part, email frankie.murdoch@solent.ac.uk or direct through Facebook.