

News from Buckinghamshire County Council

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A NEW LIFE FOR AN ANCIENT MONUMENT

Buckinghamshire County Council decides to set up a Conservation Trust to look after and open up the Medieval Village and Tudor Garden at Quarrendon, Aylesbury

The County Council has decided to seize a unique opportunity to secure public access to an ancient monument set within 83 hectare (205 acres) of natural green space at Quarrendon on the northern outskirts of Aylesbury. The future of one of the county's finest ancient monuments has been in doubt for some years as plans have been made for the northern expansion of Aylesbury in two "major development areas" at Berryfields and Weedon Hill. The site, which is now being called "Quarrendon Leas" to distinguish it from the modern housing estate south of the river, is ideally placed to meet a deficit in larger natural green spaces serving the needs of existing and new communities in Aylesbury as it lies between the town and the two new development areas. It is being offered by the Berryfields Development Consortium for nothing as most of the land is either floodplain or a scheduled ancient monument and so cannot be built upon.

Quarrendon Leas comprises the remains of a medieval village and church which was replaced by the mansion and garden of the Elizabethan courtier, Sir Henry Lee; founder of Aylesbury Grammar School. After the Tudor period the land reverted to farming leaving behind the great embankments of the formal garden and more subtle earthworks of old village streets with the mounds of an artificial rabbit warren on the skyline. Also visible are the ruins of Saint Peter's Church and the demolished farm, a moat and ponds, flood meadows along the River Thame and mature hedgerows containing rare black poplars. Quarrendon Leas is also home to amphibians, badgers, bats, hares and a variety of birdlife. Today access is limited to a single footpath on the Aylesbury Circular Walk.



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Margaret Dewar, Cabinet Member for Community Services, said: "Over the last couple of years concerns have been raised about the future of the ancient monument at Quarrendon. After careful consideration the County Council has been convinced that this important historic site has a vital role to play in building a better and greener Aylesbury. We have therefore decided to establish a new conservation trust to look after the site. Over the next few months we will be working with the developers and our many other partners in the local councils, government agencies and voluntary sector to establish the trust and find the funds not just to look after Quarrendon Leas but to make it an easily accessible 'green lung' for the whole town. The fundraising needed to realise this ambition will be hard work and has only just begun so we anticipate it will take some years for the trust to achieve all that we would like but I hope that we will see real progress over the next year."

- ENDS -

Note to newsdesks:

For further background information on the history and archaeology of Quarrendon Leas see: <http://ubp.buckscc.gov.uk/ThemeDetails.aspx?UID=TBC831>

A wide range of images are available:

1. Aerial photographs
2. Ground-level photographs
3. Artists reconstruction of Tudor mansion and garden
4. Visitors at Heritage Open Day, September 2006
5. Location map

For the full text of the Cabinet Member Decision see:

<http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/moderngov/ieDecisionDetails.asp?ID=676&J=4>

Information on Major Development Areas:

[Berryfields | Major Projects » Aylesbury Vale Advantage](#)

[Weedon Hill | Major Projects » Aylesbury Vale Advantage](#)



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