

# Transition Wilmslow



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Lindow man's peat bog is to be restored to its former glory after plans to fill it with landfill were abandoned amid environmental fears.

Under original agreements made in the 1950s and 60s, Lindow Moss, where Iron Age "bog body" Lindow Man was found in 1984, had been fated to be consigned to backfilling with inert waste and turned over to agriculture.

After decades of being stripped for horticulture, peat extraction has stopped and restoration plans are to go ahead next spring after planning permission was granted for 14 eco-homes, with the proceeds to fund the flooding and management of the bog.

The owners, who began extracting from the historic bog in 1997 under their company Croghan Peat, struck a deal with Cheshire East council to use proceeds from the properties to fund the restoration, which will re-flood the bog and begin the process of returning it to a carbon sink which can help the UK fight climate change.

Lindow Man, now in the British Museum, is the UK's best-preserved "bog body". Thought to have been violently killed in around the first century AD, he was found by commercial peat cutters before being unearthed by local archaeologist Rick Turner.

Local campaigners are calling on the owners and the council to keep the public informed about their plans by setting up a promised liaison group before work begins.

John Handley, a local restoration ecologist and Professor Emeritus at Manchester University, said: “We think, potentially, this could be one of the most important wetland restoration projects in England, given the significance of this site, especially if we can do it so it's not just a technocratic piece of restoration ecology, but the community are properly engaged.”

He warned that “conspiracy theories” had been circulating locally after heavy vehicles accessed the site earlier in the year to prepare it for restoration and rumours spread that peat cutting was restarting and that the owners would renege on their promises.

“People were supergluing the door of the gate to the compound where the machinery was kept,” he said.

The project is set to fulfil Mr Turner’s wishes for the landscape to be restored to one which would have been recognisable to Lindow Man. The archaeologist died in 2018, but in a 2014 speech he called for the bog’s restoration.

“In five hundred years do we want the burial place of Lindow Man to be similar to that of poor King Richard III?

“The choice is between a landfill site covered by dull rye-grass fields or a vibrant habitat buzzing with unusual plants and animals.

“We have the chance to return Lindow Moss into a place that Lindow Man would have recognised, and in which he met his end,” he said at the time.

Ben Malin, of consultants Terraqueous, which has been commissioned by the owners to carry out the project, said he expected work to begin next spring.

“If the intention had been to backfill it, that would have happened a long time ago. That is absolutely not the intention.

“The owners have been responsible elsewhere in the country for many, many acres of peatland restoration to a really high standard. They're proud of what they've achieved and they're looking forward to delivering a good outcome on this site.

“It is a real achievement that this resource can be kept in the ground, and can

create an environmental asset for the long term,” he said.

A spokesman for Natural England said: “Peatland habitats such as lowland raised bog are among the most important in the country, with their restoration critical to help mitigate climate change.”

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/environment/2020/11/15/lindow-mans-peat-bog-restored-former-glory/>